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THE NATIONAL CHURCH

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THE NATIONAL CHURCH

Essays on its History and Constitution and Criticisms of its Present Administration

BY

H. HENSLEY HENSON, B.D.

HON. D.D., GLASGOW; CANON OF WESTMINSTER

With an Introduction by the

REV. J. LLEWELYN DAVIES, D.D.

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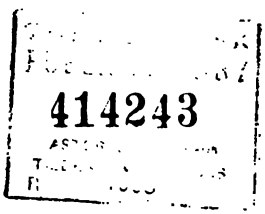

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INTRODUCTION

THE general purport of the writings contained in this volume is to protest against the ecclesiastical assumptions which are tending to make the Church of England less National than it has been and still professes to be. The feeling encouraged through its pages is that of a godly English patriotism, which honours the nation as having a Divine calling, and can look upon its history with pride.

Many of the clergy and some of the laity of our Church would at once cast such doctrine aside as "Erastian." Erastianism may have two meanings. It may represent the belief that religion is a power at once dangerous and useful, and that it is well for a Government to promote and control some kind of religion amongst its people for the sake of mitigating discontent and restraining impulses injurious to civil society. But it is also used to represent a very different conviction,—that a nation is a sacred work and instrument of God; and that it belongs to God's designs for the well-being of mankind, as revealed in history, that a people should express its faith in the living God through ordinances of confession and

worship, and should exercise such control over its religious institutions as experience and history may prove to be beneficial. This latter view does not mean that believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Church which is His Body should surrender their convictions into the hands of the State, and accept any creed which the State may choose to impose upon them. "Erastian" Anglicans do not ask either Parliament or the Convocations to prescribe to them what they are to believe. Their Erastianism is compatible with the most reverent loyalty to Christ. Their faith in the God who fashions and guides nations will incline them to welcome all national interest in the Church's affairs which honours Christ and respects the beliefs of Christians. And they cannot help seeing that grave spiritual danger haunts the sway of dominant Religion and the action of ecclesiastical authorities and assemblies.

As we study how our God is leading us in this age of enlargement and transition, it cannot but be evident to us that there is a strong tendency throughout the world towards the loosening of the bonds which have tied Church and State together. The union of Church and State is a natural development,—Christians will rather call it a Divinely ordained condition,—of the social life of mankind. This union will be disturbed when it has taken the form of a close identification of the State with an ecclesiastical organism, and when that organism has ceased to command the attachment of the ruling population of the State. Who is to say in such a case whether it is the people or the Church that is

responsible for the disturbance? But Nature forbids the union to be entirely severed. Various links between Religion and the State remain where "disestablishment" has been most thorough.

And we can perceive in the world of to-day a double movement which tends *towards* fellowship of Church and State. Religion grows more national, and civil authority more Christian. The spiritual mind of men has been everywhere led to set less and less value upon some of the traditions of the religions which they have inherited. Where the traditions of religious belief and discipline have been most fixed and complex and tyrannical, there the repudiation of them has been most defiant. This common movement towards liberation of thought and life, which has everywhere meant a more sensitive apprehension of righteousness and humanity as compared with traditional forms of expression and observance, has had a unifying influence of great interest and importance. Christians all over the world are less divided from one another than they have been. The Names of of the Divine Father of men, of Jesus Christ, of the Heavenly Spirit or Breath, are manifesting a power, and drawing to themselves a homage, which are not easily understood or measured, and of which timid souls are sometimes a little afraid. When the citizens of a State are looking up with more of reverence and hope to an Eternal Power of Righteousness and Love, they will be drawn into a deeper unity amongst themselves, and the State will not be able to keep itself aloof from the most vital forces of the national life.

We are famous in England for the anomalies of our constitution and history. And our refusals to square ourselves into logical forms of thinking and acting may reasonably be associated with our faith in a Divine Ruler and Guide, whose thoughts are greater than the human understanding, and whose Hand moulds our destiny with a wisdom larger than our own. From the time of the Reformation, when the English Realm was cut off from the Roman Communion, England, as a Christian nation, has had its own Church, consisting of ecclesiastics, ordinances, and the people, and controlled in all its administration by the State. But in the last century a rebellion arose amongst zealous Churchmen against this inherited order of Church and State, and the rebellion has grown in strength, issuing in a widespread and determined demand for the independence of the Church. The party of revolution affirms that, in matters of faith and worship, the only existing laws, being State-laws, have no validity, and that their authority ought to be definitely defied. Their principle, as they affirm it, would make it an act of disloyalty to the Church in a bishop to invoke the law if one of his clergy were to "celebrate" in a frock-coat and to preach ostentatiously the New Theology.

The cause of Home Rule for the Church has analogies with the cause of Home Rule for Ireland. Each is backed by persuasive arguments, each is supported by fanaticism and devotion. But the people of England cannot consent to make Ireland independent; and the people of England, if the

question became a practical one, would not consent to make "the Church" independent. Are not all our corporate bodies showing a remarkable tenacity in holding fast powers and patronage? I cannot imagine the representatives of the nation surrendering the power they now exercise in Church matters; I cannot imagine the people of England willingly setting free such an *imperium in imperio* as the Church of England in its present and prospective strength would be.

To the party of revolution itself the process of obtaining independence for the Church must present difficulties which might well be considered insurmountable. The Civil Authority would have to create by statute an ecclesiastical body to which legal rights might be given. A composite Assembly, called the Representative Church Council, a most cumbrous piece of constitutional machinery, and very questionably "representative" except as regards the clergy, has been brought into existence, in the hope that the government of the Church of England may be unconditionally handed over to it. But this is surely the vainest of hopes. The English Parliament is not likely to regard the admission of two semi-clerical Houses of Laymen into subordinate places in the Council as making this body a fit inheritor of its own legislative authority and of the national control implied in the Royal Supremacy. Extreme clericalists, whilst they would concede some powers to lay members of the Church, hardly seem to recognize that the Legislature would have not only to confer the powers, but also to define the membership. The trail of

the Erastian serpent would lie over the whole constitution of the reconstructed church. The one course, clear of Erastianism, that seems to be open to those who would liberate themselves from the Reformation Settlement, is to go out personally from the established order and to form a Free Church—as the Free Kirk in Scotland, and all the Nonconformist "Free Churches" have been formed.

It is a chief characteristic of the world of our time that the national sentiment is everywhere peculiarly strong. Each nation is worshipped by sons and daughters with a devotion which makes the sacrifice of a life a joyful offering. This is seen not only in Japan and in Russia, but in Germany and France and Italy. Patriotism is the religion of multitudes who have little other religion. And it is not a low form of religion. It pays homage to a Power which is apprehended as building out of families a City that is at unity in itself; a Power which maintains a beneficent order, which upholds righteousness and diffuses light, which lifts up those who are down, which draws out self-devotion, which fosters the growth of all national graces and happinesses. The ideal country of to-day is a not unworthy creation of the Living God.

According to the Christian Faith, the God of the Jews is the God of the Gentiles also; the God of the Catholic Church gives himself to be the God of each nation. We English have not found it difficult to confess and worship the Father of the Crucified Son of Man as the God of our fathers and of our country. There is no incompatibility between the strongest

Catholic sentiment and the strongest National sentiment. What is our hope for the world, but that all its nations, feeling after God, may find each its own God in the God and Father of all? The true Englishman will throw back with secure confidence the reproaches of the Church which has excommunicated us, and which stamps "nationalism" as a heresy. We do not read the Old Testament for nothing.

The English nation cannot, consistently with honour and duty, show endless tolerance to anarchical defiance of Law,—in the Church any more than in Ireland. But never was the Civil Authority of this land more tolerant and respectful towards religious convictions than it is now. Never had Christian thought and Christian piety freer scope or a more favourable atmosphere than in our National Church. Never was there a House of Commons that had more feeling for justice and humanity than that which represents us to-day. Why, when the omens are pointing so hopefully towards the growth of a Christian National mind, impatient of worn-out restrictions and tired of separation, should bishops and clergymen set themselves to cherish a temper of ecclesiastical exclusiveness? If, in accordance with the scriptural theology, we think of the God of the Church, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, as being the Eternal Power of Righteousness and Love, of Justice and Humanity, we shall find it impossible to separate the things of the Church from the things of the State. The Church and the State, whilst they have their distinct functions, are drawn by the

"viewless hands" of their respective obligations to bow together before the same Eternal Throne.

The readers of this book will find in it instruction and encouragement, offered by a mind full of knowledge and enthusiasm and practical sense, for those who yearn to see a Christian England filling its place loyally in the kingdom of God, nobly and grandly in the world of the nations.

J. LLEWELYN DAVIES.

PREFACE

THE papers collected in this volume have been written during the last two years, and mainly during the last twelve months. They were in most cases composed with the design of inclusion in a larger treatment of the principal subject with which they are concerned, and although advantage was taken of incidents occurring in the intervals of writing, and to that extent they must be described as "occasional," yet that design was never lost from the writer's mind, and there is a true unity in the collection. By connecting opinions and judgments with actual occurrences which illustrated them, it seemed that there might even be some important advantage. The fidelity of the implied estimate of the ecclesiastical situation would thus in some degree be guaranteed.

Perhaps a few observations on the attitude towards the Episcopate everywhere either expressed or suggested in this volume may not be superfluous. The writer holds firmly that, while the National Church has ever been *Episcopal*, it has never been what has come to be described as *Episcopalian*. Its definition of the Christian Church does not include in

the list of essentials the government by Bishops, which yet it regards as Apostolic, and values highly on grounds both sentimental and practical. Its history since the Reformation disallows the notion that non-episcopal churches are properly outside its recognition, although unquestionably that history certifies the early rise of rigid episcopalian views within the reformed Church, and the rapid extension of them within the last two generations. That historical criticism has justified the generous practice of the Reformers, and added a new intellectual basis for an opinion, which at first stood mostly on its own merits as reasonable and charitable, will not be questioned by any English Churchman who accepts, as competent exponents of the witness of Christian history, such scholars as the late Bishop Lightfoot, the late Dr. Hort, the late Dr. Edwin Hatch, and the present Bishop of Salisbury. The doctrine of the XXIst Article is more authoritative as well as more charitable than that of modern Episcopalians, and, if it could be seriously affirmed and acted upon, would offer a basis for some working arrangement between the several Churches of Christendom, which an insistence on the "historic Episcopate" can never do.

It has been maintained in this volume that the undue exaltation of the Episcopate is at the root of much of the existing confusion within the National Church, and properly involves an ecclesiastical theory inconsistent with national establishment. The postulates of a Divine right Episcopate carry farther than those who accept them commonly perceive. They justify the sacerdotal conception of the

Christian Ministry, and therein those sacramental doctrines and disciplines, which the Fathers of the English Reformation most desired to repudiate. Vestments and ceremonies are the natural, perhaps even the inevitable, expressions of doctrine, and, accordingly, if the sacerdotal doctrines be accepted by the English clergy, it would appear sufficiently futile to attempt to restrain the appropriate ceremonial. Bishops claiming to rule by exclusive Divine Right, and compelled to build that claim, not on history, or on law, or on Scripture, but on a so-called "Catholic" theory of the Church, cannot effectively separate themselves from the other practical implications of that theory.

The English Reformation was certainly not effected by the episcopate, nor can it be justified on the episcopalian theory. A national Church, episcopal, indeed, yet existing in isolation from the general body of the Christian episcopate, and acknowledging the Royal Supremacy in such full sense that no non-national authority is allowed to be superior in any sphere, within which external authority can be recognized at all, can never be governed on episcopalian principles, and the attempt so to govern it cannot but induce precisely the kind of confusion which we now observe in the Church of England. It is important to insist upon these truths for another reason. Within a few months the fifth Conference of Anglican Bishops will assemble at Lambeth, and will be engaged in considering matters of the deepest and most anxious concern to the National Church. The student of contemporary

Anglicanism will observe the tendency to invest that episcopal gathering with an authority, which is altogether wider and more pretentious than any known to the constitution of the reformed Church. That tendency reflects the rise and spread of episcopalianism, and augurs ill for the liberty of English Churchmen. Manifestly it assumes as the sole basis of the Conference the Tractarian theory of the episcopal office. Every bishop as such is supposed to be qualified to legislate for the Christian Church: all bishops are by virtue of their office held to be equal. This theory is repugnant alike to common sense, and to the self-respect of the Christian society. Take a familiar case. A vigorous Ritualistic incumbent, sound in wind and limb, whose proselytizing fervour is unchastened by knowledge, and unshadowed by thought, is selected for the episcopal office in a colony or in the mission field, not by any national authority, but by a partizan committee representing some partizan society. He submerges his individuality in a fantastic territorial title, and, thus disguised, returns every tenth year to vote on equal terms with our most eminent prelates, chosen, as we are bound to assume, by the civil chiefs of the Nation, for their commanding abilities and attainments, to be the leaders of the National Church. On the episcopalian theory, moreover, the difference between churches, which, if any representative character attach to a bishop, must be reflected in the relative weight assigned to the bishops in the Conference, is ignored. Lebombo is the equal of London, Zululand pairs with Durham or Winchester

in a Pan-Anglican Conference. The patent absurdity must not blind us to the latent danger. It was not without prescience that Archbishop Longley, in convening the first Lambeth Conference, emphasized the total absence of authority in its decisions, and stated with force and lucidity the narrow limits within which it could usefully debate. On the eve of the fifth gathering of Bishops it cannot be unfitting to recall his words:—

> "'It should be distinctly understood,' he said, 'that at this meeting no declaration of faith shall be made, and no decision come to which shall affect generally the interests of the Church, but that we shall meet together for brotherly counsel and encouragement . . . . I should refuse to convene any assembly which pretended to enact any canons, or affected to make any decisions binding on the Church'"[1]

In his letter of formal invitation the Archbishop reiterated these declarations. It is important to reaffirm his words at the present time, and to insist on their being accepted in the letter and in the spirit. "Such a meeting would not be competent to make declarations or lay down definitions on points of doctrine." It is, perhaps, worth recalling to the public mind the sinister and suggestive fact that, in spite of these precautionary assurances, the first Lambeth Conference proceeded to condemn Bishop Colenso for his teaching in regard to the Old Testament, "an act which seemed to Dean Stanley and others to be wrong in itself, and fraught with danger to the cause of free inquiry in theology, as well as a violation of the best traditions of the Church of

[1] *v.* The Lambeth Conferences of 1867, 1878, and 1888, edited by Randall T. Davidson, Dean of Windsor, p. 10. S.P.C.K.

England."[1] Anyone who will be at the pains to read the "Official Reports and Resolutions" of the Conferences will hardly miss the note of steadily waxing self-assertion, which has now reached a point that seems to threaten some formal claim on the part of the assembled bishops to legislate for the Anglican Communion, by title of a Divine right inherent in the episcopate. Such a claim could only be recognized at the cost of the national character of the Church of England, and could hardly fail to affect for evil the whole procedure of the Church. It is not sufficiently remembered that episcopalianism is necessarily hostile to tolerance and to theological liberty, for it rests on a retrogressive theory, and imposes a dead hand of conciliar decisions on the thought of the modern church. Episcopalianism is a principle of ecclesiastical isolation, and of intellectual sterility.

The invasion of episcopalian views is the more regrettable, since it coincides with a frank recognition of the great practical advantages of the episcopal system, in quarters where such recognition was perhaps little to be looked for. An example is to hand in the address delivered by the Moderator of the Church of Scotland delivered at the close of the General Assembly on May 31st, 1907. Here is an earnest plea for the revival of "superintendents," who, as the speaker seems to perceive, would bear a close resemblance to bishops. The interest of the subject may justify a short quotation:

> "Who is responsible for the due oversight of ministers and kirk-sessions; and on whom lies the task of seeing

[1] *v. Life of Philips Brooks*, II. 595.

> that they discharge their duty to the greatest good of the people and the advancement of the highest interests of the Church? . . . these are questions which must in the present day be resolutely faced. The obvious answer is that to the Presbyteries of the Church belongs this duty, that in them is vested the episcopal authority. Theoretically that is so. Practically, however, Presbyterial superintendence is little more than a name. . . . I am far from blaming Presbyteries. In the present day the difficulties of such superintendence are great. The cessation from this work has been practically universal and of long standing, and the attempts in some quarters lately made to revive it have scarcely justified the labour. . . . Is there a remedy? I venture to think there is, though perhaps it needs some courage to avow it. Yet you have not placed me in this office to prophesy only smooth things, but to declare what I believe to be for the highest interests of the Church. The simplest, the most constitutional remedy would be to revive the order of superintendent. . . . At once the objection will be raised that this is Episcopacy under a new name. . . . The only resemblance is in the name and in the general character of the work. In fact, the institution of this office gave to the Church all that was good in the episcopate without admitting those exclusive claims and powers, with the pride and spiritual arrogance often engendered by them, which have caused the larger part of Protestantism to discard the episcopal office."

Episcopal government, strong in its unique interest, in its historic traditions, in its roots in the most distant past, in its practical effectiveness, does not need the dangerous recommendations of a theory disallowed by historical science and insulting to the self-respect of the great Protestant Churches. It is truly lamentable that the Church of England, which for the greatest part of three centuries has been justly described as "the head of the Protestant interest in Europe," should now by the action of a section of its clergy be made a force of disintegration in the Protestant world, and the exponent of principles

which have their free and unimpeded expression only in the extreme but thoroughly logical despotism of Rome.

The question of "disestablishment" is not directly treated of in this volume, but it will be apparent that the writer is decisively opposed to that project and policy. He is not, of course, unconscious of the difficulties which now attach to the notion of "establishment," and to the action of a "national" Church. If in these papers these difficulties are not fairly faced, it is partly because the limits of space prohibited the inclusion of so large a subject, and partly because he designs a separate and more detailed consideration in the near future. Here it must suffice to point out that, however grave may be the difficulties attaching to a national establishment of Christianity under modern conditions, they are not more serious, indeed they are far less serious, than the difficulties which would attach to the so-called "catholic" organization of a disestablished Church, which persisted in its isolation from the parent system of Rome, while repudiating the principle on which alone that isolation could originally have been effected, or can now be defended.

The "establishment" of the Church may be theoretically paradoxical, but it is practically serviceable. It secures immense religious opportunities, and it prevents grave spiritual disasters. The "Ritualist" party are beginning openly to agitate for disestablishment, because they begin to question whether, on the balance of loss and gain, they stand to lose by it. An excellent exposition of "Ritualistic"

policy has recently issued from the press. In Mr. Lathbury's extremely interesting sketch of Mr. Gladstone's life, in the latest volume of the series of biographical sketches edited by the Right Honourable George Russell, there is a cleverly masked argument for disestablishment recommended by the name and authority of the most popular of modern statesmen, who was also, by an arresting and unique combination, the most devoted of Tractarians. In one place the author, more frank than prudent, admits that the reason why his party acquiesced for half a century in the supremacy of the Privy Council, was the perception of the necessity under which they lay of taking time to prepare Anglican opinion for the legal suppression of Evangelical views. The whole passage is so suggestive that it must be reproduced :—

> "The Judicial Committee is still the Court of Final Appeal in ecclesiastical causes. It was condemned, indeed, by a Royal Commission in 1883, but it has survived to receive the condemnation of another in 1906. What is it that has caused this change? It is not that High Churchmen have grown more content with the Judicial Committee; on the contrary, its decisions have met with almost uniform disobedience. It is not that they think better of the practical working of the Royal Supremacy under modern conditions; on the contrary, it is more generally and more openly repudiated to-day than it was half a century ago. The real explanation I believe to be that High Churchmen came by degrees to see that they were embarked upon a larger enterprise than they had at first thought. Courts can but reflect the mind of the community to whose decisions they give form and expression. History was on the side of Mr. Gorham, if not as regards his actual opinions, at all events as regards the opinions put into his mouth by the Judicial Committee. Evangelical doctrines under various names had, at all times, had their place in the

> post Reformation Church and, less than a generation before the Gorham Judgment was delivered, that place was one of almost unchallenged supremacy. A counter-Reformation which began by ignoring these plain facts would have no chance of success. The principles which the Tractarians had found in the Prayer Book must be reduced to practice on a larger scale before they could be established by judicial decisions." [1]

There is no shadow of doubt that the Broad Church party would have no better treatment than the Low Church from the victorious Tractarians, if these should at length succeed in establishing by judicial decisions the principles they conceive themselves able to find in the Prayer Book. The "Essays and Reviews" verdict was certainly not less repugnant to the High Church party than the Gorham Judgment, and led to no less an agitation. The Low Churchman and the Broad Churchman agree in accepting the authority of the Supreme Court, and when, as in the Bennett case, that tribunal sanctions doctrines which are repugnant to them, they accept the situation with loyalty; but it is otherwise with the High Church party; they only so far accept the toleration of other opinions than their own as they are compelled for lack of power to do otherwise, biding their time, and working for their opportunity, when they shall be able to narrow the National Church until it allows no other opinions than their own.

Mr. Lathbury boldly denies the right of the nation to have any control over the action of the clergy, or, as he prefers to say, "the Church." He quietly identifies the Church, not even with the Hierarchy, but with

[1] Pp. 89, 90.

those members of the Hierarchy, mostly of comparatively unimportant position, and certainly destitute of any representative character, who have laboured to revolutionize the legal system of public worship, and argues on that basis.

> "The objects of the changes which have been effected in Anglican ceremonial since 1874 are perfectly well known, and if the nation is of opinion that they have so changed the character of the Church of England as to make her retention as an Establishment inexpedient, it has only to say so. What it has not a right to say is that, as it wishes to retain an Established Church, it means to remodel the Church of England to its mind. To do this is to assert a claim which would be monstrous in the case of a Benefit Society or a Freemasons' Lodge. The legitimate control of the State over the spiritual action of a Church begins and ends with Establishment." [1]

In view of the actual history of the English Reformation, it requires some hardihood thus straitly to limit the rights of the nation, but what is most to be noted is the complete identification of the Church, not merely with the clergy, but with the Ritualistic clergy. The "changes which have been effected in Anglican ceremonial since 1874" have not been effected by the bishops, or by the convocations, but by individual clergymen acting without the authority, and often against the known wishes of both. How can such lawless and arbitrary action be supposed so straitly to bind the nation that, unless it be accepted, there is no other course legitimately open but the violent and repulsive course of disestablishment? On what theory of the Church are all the powers both of its Hierarchy and its Laity vested in self-appointed cliques of

[1] Pp. 183-4.

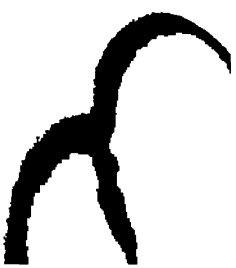
innovators? The vast majority of Englishmen are baptized, and as such members of the Christian Church, and their only instrument of effective self-expression in ecclesiastical affairs is Parliament. Why should the action of these lay members of the Church in Parliament be spoken of as if it were the action of some external and even hostile body? What fitness is there in the suggested parallel between the National Church and some voluntary association such as a Benefit Society or a Lodge of Freemasons? Such questions, perhaps, will suffice to make clear the essentially sophistical character of Mr. Lathbury's reasoning.

It remains that the writer should express his grateful acknowledgments to the Hon. Arthur Elliot, the Editor, and to Messrs. Longmans, Green, and Co., the Proprietors, of the "Edinburgh Review" for permission to reprint the article on "Convocation and the Church," and to Mr. Percy Bunting for similar permission to print the two articles on the "Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline," and the article entitled "Letters of Business," which appeared in the "Contemporary Review" in the course of 1906.

The writer's thanks are especially due to Dr. Llewelyn Davies for writing an "Introduction" to this Volume, interesting and suggestive in itself, and peculiarly valuable as the work of one whose name is still treasured in London, the scene for so many years of his unselfish and fruitful labour. Dr. Llewelyn Davies is revered widely as a link between present conflicts and difficulties, and the heroic age which

witnessed the teaching and persecution of Frederic Denison Maurice, of whose earlier disciples he is now perhaps the only conspicuous survivor, one of those who were in the dark days not disciples only but also champions of the Master.

H. H. H.



THE NATIONAL CHURCH

PART I

I

ESTABLISHMENT [1]

JESUS ANSWERED, MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD: IF MY KINGDOM WERE OF THIS WORLD, THEN WOULD MY SERVANTS FIGHT, THAT I SHOULD NOT BE DELIVERED TO THE JEWS: BUT NOW IS MY KINGDOM NOT FROM HENCE.—*St. John* xviii. 36.

AND THE NATIONS SHALL WALK AMIDST THE LIGHT THEREOF, AND THE KINGS OF THE EARTH DO BRING THEIR GLORY INTO IT.—*Revelation* xxi. 24.

IT would be difficult to find in the whole number of calendared saints one who appeals less to the reason and to the conscience of a modern English Churchman than King Edward the Confessor, whose "translation" we celebrate here to-day. He was not a patriot like Alfred, the uncanonized but unquestioned royal saint of England: nor was he the victim of unmerited violence, a martyr by right of his wrongs if not of his witness, like the earlier monarch of his name, who has a place in the calendar; nor did he perish at the hands of persecuting heathen like the

[1] (Preached on the Festival of the Translation of King Edward the Confessor, October 13th, 1907, in Westminster Abbey.)

East Anglian, St. Edmund, King and Martyr: nor was he, in a licentious age, conspicuously distinguished by his domestic virtues,[1] like that hapless Stuart, whose tragic fate was long commemorated in the Reformed Church by an annual service of humiliation. At one point or another, Alfred, Edward, Edmund, Charles, appeal to us successfully, and evoke our admiration or our sympathy, but Edward the Confessor is exiled from our respect, almost from our comprehension, by the very traits which earned for him a place in the calendar, and drew to his name in rare measure the adoring reverence of many generations of Englishmen. Of the curiously carved reliefs in the Chapel of the Kings,[2] which tell the story of his life as it was known to the mediæval artists, there

[1] The Confessor is said to have devoted himself to a life of perpetual virginity, although he was married. "It is certain that, at a time when it was especially needful to provide direct heirs to the Crown, the marriage of Eadward and Eadgyth was childless." Freeman, however, has shown that the monastic hagiographers are more laudatory than convincing. The king's childlessness may have had a natural, and not an ascetic, origin.

[2] "The Screen which extends across this Chapel on the west is one of the most remarkable specimens of ancient art that now remains; and although woefully dilapidated, it is still exceedingly interesting and curious. . . . It possesses a sculptured frieze, on which the principal events, both real and imaginary, of Edward the Confessor's life, are represented in alto-reliefs. These are displayed in fourteen compartments, separated from each other by an equal number of irregularly-shaped quatrefoils." The subjects of these reliefs are the following:—

I. The Prelates and Nobility swearing fealty to Edward the Confessor when in his mother's womb.

II. Birth of Edward the Confessor.

III. The Coronation of Edward the Confessor.

IV. King Edward alarmed by the appearance of the Devil dancing upon the money collected for the payment of Dane-gelt.

V. Edward the Confessor's generous admonition to the thief who was purloining his treasures.

VI. The miraculous Appearance of our Saviour to King Edward when partaking of the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

is but one which carries any clear testimony to his personal character, and that one—the pardoning of the dishonest scullion—is both historically doubtful and morally unsatisfactory. It is indeed one of the ironies of history that this feeble and indolent monarch, who—to adopt an authoritative modern estimate, that of the late Prof. Freeman—"was utterly lacking in all kingly qualities," and whose "natural place was, not on the throne of England, but at the head of a Norman abbey," should have become to the view of succeeding generations the very embodiment of ideal kingship, and the symbol of national independence. The explanation of the paradox is not hard to discover, but it assumes little to the credit of the king himself. Edward, we are reminded, "was the one prominent man in the days immediately before the Conquest whom Normans and Englishmen could agree to reverence. The English naturally cherished the memory of the last prince of the ancient stock. . . . . The king who

VII. The Drowning of the King of Denmark, as beheld in a Vision by King Edward.

VIII. The Quarrel between Tosti and Harold, Earl Goodwin's sons, at the King's table.

IX. Edward the Confessor's Vision of the Seven Sleepers.

X. St. John the Evangelist in the garb of a Pilgrim requesting alms of Edward the Confessor.

XI. The restoring of the blind men to sight by washing in the same water which had been used by King Edward.

XII. St. John delivering the Ring and Message to the two Pilgrims.

XIII. The Pilgrims returning the Ring to King Edward, in conformity with the Saint's command.

XIV. Dedication of Edward the Confessor's Church.

Neale illustrates his account with two admirable etchings of the Reliefs.

(*v.* "History and Antiquities of the Abbey Church of St. Peter, Westminster," illustrated by J. H. Neale. London. 1823. vol. ii, p. 47 f.)

reigned on the English throne without a spark of English feeling became the popular embodiment of English nationality, and men called for the laws of King Edward as in earlier times they had called for the laws of Cnut or of Edgar. . . . . In English eyes Edward stood out in contrast to the invader William; in Norman eyes he stood out in contrast to the usurper Harold. A king whom two hostile races thus agreed in respecting could not fail to obtain both popular and formal canonization on somewhat easy terms." Professor Freeman, indeed, maintains that "he must have displayed some personal qualities which really won him popular affection during life, and maintained him in popular reverence after death," but the historian is unable to offer any sufficient contemporary evidence for his charitable hypothesis, and it remains without other support than its own plausibility. It is not the case, as might readily be supposed, that the unfavourable estimate of the Confessor which now prevails is wholly a modern verdict on a saintly career, become by change of time unintelligible. Rather it would be true to say that Edward's reputation was created by, and carried into general acceptance with, the sacerdotal and ascetic doctrines which dominated Christendom in the 11th century. There survive in the literature of the age indications of an estimate of the saint which accord substantially with that of our own time. "The Scandinavian writers, placed beyond the influences which had effect upon both English and Norman writers, seem to have all along estimated him at his true value," and even William of Malmesbury "shows us

that in his day there were still people in England by whom the royal saint was lightly esteemed, and himself seems now and then to halt between two opinions. He gives him no higher surname than 'Edwardus Simplex,' and over and over again, as if of set purpose, he speaks of his 'simplicitas' as his chief characteristic." [1]

Naturally, since Edward had become the recognized model of Christian Kingship as conceived by the mediæval clergy, his cultus emerges conspicuously at those junctures of the national history at which the conflict of Church and State became acute. We may illustrate the point from the record of this Festival. Three times the Confessor's Remains were "translated," and those "translations" coincide with the crises of English History. On October 13th, 1163, the body of the newly canonized saint was first translated by Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the presence of Henry II. The two men were as yet united by the bonds of a close personal friendship, but not many months would elapse before they would be parted in a conflict so protracted and so fierce that before its close the primate would be murdered in his own cathedral, and the monarch would kneel in penitence at his victim's tomb. Thomas and Henry symbolized the forces which in the 12th century were at strife throughout Western Christendom: they embodied conflicting principles. Here in England the battle took specific form on the issue of law versus privilege, national law versus clerical privilege. The immediate

[1] *v.* Freeman's Note on "The Legendary History of Eadward," Norman Conquest I., 525 f.

victory was with the murdered primate, whose shrine in Canterbury Cathedral more than rivalled in magnificence the older shrine of the Confessor in Westminster Abbey. But the future was not with privilege, but with law. In the 12th century paradoxical though it may seem, privilege rather than law was the instrument of justice: for the State had not yet emerged from the violence of barbarism, and the Church rescued from oppression by her privilege vast multitudes of the most helpless people of the land.[1] The day would come, nay, it was already dawning, when the State would become equal to its own theory, and then, when the general conscience had ceased to sanction privilege, the reign of law would be established. The free Englishman of the

[1] "It is doubtless true that the privileges of the Church in the Norman era should be considered as the franchises of the people; it was through the Clergy only that the voice of the people could be heard. From the unity of the national Church the unity of the kingdom had itself sprung, and the liberties of the Church were almost the only liberties that were left under the change of dynasty" (*v.* "Historical Introductions to the Rolls Series," by W. Stubbs, D.D., ed. Hassall. London, 1902, p. 111).

R. H. Froude has stated the same fact effectively, but with some characteristic exaggeration, in his "Remains," Vol. II., p. 31 f, "the high-church party of the twelfth century endeavoured, as much as possible, to make common cause with the poor and the defenceless. Becket always speaks of the poor as 'Pauperes Christi': and the condescension which his party practised towards them, both before and after his time, appears to us incredible. . . . The claim which the Church put forward to exclusive jurisdiction in the causes of widows and orphans was part of the same system, and was also regarded, as we have seen, with especial jealousy. Indeed, it is easy to see that any system which allied the lower orders to the Church, would for that very reason tend to alienate the nobility from it. And more particularly would the latter feel indignant at a power which intruded itself between them and their vassals, and, in an age when hereditary distinction was especially valued, took upon itself to dispense with the privileges of birth, often authorizing the peasant to exercise spiritual authority over his lord."

20th century may unite in his grateful recollection both Thomas and Henry.

A century passes, and again Westminster witnessed the Translation of St. Edward. On October 13th, 1269, Henry III. placed the bones of his sainted predecessor in the glorious shrine he had prepared for their reception. We are worshipping to-day beneath the vaulted roof, now grey with the passing of more than six centuries, which then was newly built. You will remember the critical importance of the time. But four years had gone by since Simon de Montfort (whose shield yet adorns the northern wall of the nave) had assembled the first representative assembly which can be called a House of Commons. Henry's son, Simon's god-son, named out of respect for the Confessor, Edward, would bring to completion the work which the far-sighted genius of de Montfort had begun, and would establish firmly the parliamentary constitution of England. Henry II. and Edward I. are indeed the twin pillars of the English constitution; the one laid firmly the foundations of the judicial, the other as firmly those of the political system of the country. Order and liberty find in these great monarchs their champions and exponents, and both are brought to mind on this Festival of St. Edward's Translation. The 13th century, moreover, witnessed an acute phase of the standing conflict between Church and State. It was an age of great legislators—Frederick II. and Gregory X., St. Louis, Alphonso the Wise, Edward I.—and at its close the lines of national development within Christendom were becoming clear. The very fact

that Edward I. was named after the Confessor has been considered, and justly, as an indication of the newly awakened pride that was now felt by the English people in their nationality. The State in its conflict with the Papacy would henceforward have behind it the power of a waxing national sentiment, and this sentiment would find manifold expression—in a vernacular literature, in a passionate patriotism, in a distinctiveness of religious and moral point of view, in a sharply defined type of national character. Henry III. and Edward I. may be said to represent the two conceptions of the Confessor—the clerical and the national. Already the English people had come to demand in their rulers other virtues than those which Roman Pontiffs delighted to honour, and accordingly, while Edward I., the English Justinian, is the most honoured of our mediæval sovereigns, Henry III., who perhaps most resembled the Confessor in personal character and tastes, was, of all our monarchs, the least respected.

Nearly three centuries run out in the hour-glass of history, and there happens the third and last translation of St. Edward. Let me read the contemporary record of a London citizen, which is entered under the year 1557:—

> "The 20th day of March was taken up at Westminster again with a hundred lights king Edward the Confessor in the same place where his shrine was, and it shall be set up again as fast as my lord Abbot can have it done, for it was a godly sight to have seen it, how reverently he was carried from the place that he was taken up where he was laid when that the Abbey was spoiled and robbed: and so he was carried, and goodly singing and censing as has been seen, and mass sung."[1]

[1] *v.* "Machyn's Diary," p. 130 (Camden Soc.).

It was the brief religious reaction which gave sinister significance to the reign of the unhappy Mary Tudor, and there is the ring of fanatical exultation in the annalist's words. A little lower on the page in the Camden Society's Reprint of "Machyn's Dairy" we read that just a fortnight after the translation of St. Edward's bones to the sacred site where Abbot Feckenham's restored shrine would receive them in due course, and preserve them to our own time, five persons out of Essex were condemned for heresy, three men and two women, to be burned in Smithfield. That melancholy record makes plain the true meaning of the restoration of the mediæval system, which the ceremony in the Abbey illustrated and symbolized. Thus the Translation of St. Edward connects itself also with the final phase of the long conflict between Church and State, the phase in which the Church of England, as we know it, a truly national Church, acknowledging no earthly supreme governor save only the King, finding in the national institutions the sufficient instruments of its self-government, came into existence.[1] The conflict of law versus privilege

[1] Even those who most insist on the spiritual authority of the Convocations will not dispute that these are national institutions. Elizabeth's Supremacy Act (1559) defines heresy, which least of all might seem definable by a national authority, as matter for Parliamentary decision. Commissioners appointed under the Act "shall not in any wise have authority or power to order, determine, or adjudge any matter or cause to be heresy, but only such as heretofore have been determined, ordered, or adjudged to be heresy, by the authority of the canonical Scriptures, or by the first four general Councils, or any of them, or by any other general Council wherein the same was declared heresy by the express and plain words of the said canonical Scriptures, or such *as hereafter shall be ordered, judged, or determined to be heresy by the High Court of Parliament of this realm*, with the assent of the clergy in their Convocation." There was mediæval precedent for the spiritual supremacy of Parliament, for in the 14th century it was

had been followed by the conflict of the nation with the papacy, and this in turn by the deeper and more momentous strife between the Christianity of the New Testament and private judgment, on the one hand, and the Christianity of ecclesiastical tradition and external authority, on the other. The whole drama of England's history in its successive phases is gathered up in the associations of this Festival. The master-builders of our constitution pass before us on St. Edward's Day—Henry II., and Edward I., and Henry VIII.—and the heroes of the conflicts which they severally represent—Thomas à Becket and Simon de Montfort, and the martyrs of the Reformation. This Festival may have little personal interest, and less religious importance; for we can no more exalt the conventional virtues of the Confessor, and have lost for ever the ancient veneration of relics which inspired the translation and cultus of the bodies of saints, but no reflective Englishman will deny its

enacted that during the papal schism the selection of the true pope should be determined by Parliament. This, however, was an extraordinary arrangement to meet a crisis. Ordinarily the nation had no control over the determination of heresy, and the acceptance of popes. At the Reformation the national authority was made completely and permanently paramount. Necessarily, this fact was expressed as a Supremacy of the Monarch, but the Monarch cannot be rightly regarded as other than the Embodiment of the State. In point of fact the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Crown has passed together with the rest of the royal prerogatives under the control of the constitutional principle, expressed in the phrase "the King reigns but does not govern." It appears, therefore, to be a wholly futile procedure to draw a distinction between the personal authority of the Tudors and Stuarts, and the nominal authority of the post-Revolution Sovereigns. The instruments by means of which the autonomous nation directs its ecclesiastical concerns may vary from time to time, but the broad fact is unchallenged—viz., that the nation is ecclesiastically autonomous, and, as the men of the 16th century might have said, "absolute.

extraordinary wealth of reminiscences, and its rare historic interest.[1] Yet it may fairly be contended that something more is required to justify such a service as this, to make possible that religious exaltation of our minds which belongs to Christian worship, to bring into apparent and effective contact with our own lives this archaic commemoration of a long

[1] A curious illustration of the credulity of the middle ages and the passion for relics is provided by the list of relics presented to Westminster Abbey by the Confessor. It is printed in Dart's *Westmonasterium*, vol. I., p. 37, and runs as follows:—

"Edward the Confessor gave part of the place where Christ was born; of His Manger, and also of the Frankincense offered to our Lord by the Eastern Magi; of the Table of our Lord; of the Bread which He blessed; of the Seat where he was presented in the Temple; of the Wilderness where He fasted; of the Gaol where He was imprisoned; great part of the holy Cross enclosed in a certain [casket] particularly beautified and distinguished; with many other pieces of the same. He gave also the Cross that floated against Wind and Wave over-sea from Normandy hither with that king, and great part of one of the Nails of our Saviour's Cross; part of His undivided Garment, of the Sponge, Lance, and Scourge with which he was tortured; of the Sepulchre, and Cloth that bound His Head; of the Mountains Golgotha and Calvary. Many pieces of the Vestments of the Virgin Mary; of the Linen that she wove; of the Window in which the Angel stood when he saluted her; of her Milk; of her Hair; of her Shoes; and her Bed; also the Girdle which she worked with her own hands, always wore and dropped to St. Thomas the Apostle at her assumption. Of the Hairs of St. Peter's Beard; and part of his Cross; relics of St. Paul—viz., a certain cloth in which his Head was wrapped when cut off, one of the fingers and some blood of the same Apostle, many bones of St. Andrew, and part of his Cross. A bone of St. James Major, and relics of the Apostles Philip and James; arms of the Apostles Bartholomew and Thomas; with the relics of the Apostles Barnaby, Matthew, and Matthias; great part of the body of St. Buttulph the Abbat, with one of his cowls, and relics of the same; also the head, pouch, and ivory staff of St. Andwen the Bishop; and relics of St. Giles, Jerome, Ethelwold, Erkenwald, Thodoric, and many others; the head of St. Margaret, with other bones, and of her clothes; oil of the tomb of St. Katherine; relics of St. Cecilia, Tecle; and half a jaw with three teeth of St. Anastasia." If is worth while to read through this ridiculous list in order to realise the abyss which separates the age which could value and venerate such rubbish, and our own which has barely patience to take note of the items.

obsolete ceremonial. On reflection, I apprehend that this additional element will not be found absent from our Festival.

Every commemoration of some long past event takes in the minds of serious Christians one of two aspects. It is either an act of humiliation, or an act of thanksgiving, a solemn Fast or a high Festival. There is no question as to the character of this service. We have gathered here to-day to thank God for that civilization which is so strikingly symbolized by a canonized monarch. It is, indeed, easy for modern Englishmen to forget the benefits which they owe to the consecration of the national life, out of which proceeded that intimate union of Church and State which survives still, and has wonderfully influenced the character and the habits of the English people. It is easy to mistake the meaning, and to miss the importance of what we are accustomed to speak of by a somewhat prosaic and hackneyed term as "Establishment."[1] For to many minds the State now appears so august and so beneficent as to stand in no need of any direct and acknowledged relation to the Religion of Christ: and to many others, more devout if less practical, the very scale and manifoldness of civic action render perilous and humiliating to the Church that legal and constitutional union with the State which has come down to us from the dawn of our national history. The sacerdotalist and the

[1] *v.* Lord Selborne's well-known "Defence of the Church of England against Disestablishment," p. 69 f, for some valuable observations on the meaning of this word, which is too often misunderstood by controversialists of all parties.

sectarian find a common basis of action, when the claim of the State to control the action of the hierarchy is in debate: and these strange allies—the zealots of ecclesiastical authority and the zealots of religious individualism—combine to repudiate the notion of a national Church, the instrument, symbol, guardian, and exponent of those principles and ideals which are fairly summed up in the phrase national Christianity. On St. Edward's Day, an English preacher fulfilling his duty in this holy place, where the Sovereigns of England for 850 years have come to receive the crown of a Christian Kingship, whose grey walls and vaulted roofs have often echoed the shouts of free citizens acclaiming such a Kingship as the bulwark of order, justice, and liberty, where on every hand the eye rests on some memorial of consecrated patriotism, and the foot presses a soil mingled with the ashes of national heroes—I say, the preacher in Westminster Abbey may be forgiven if he lift his voice in appeal to his countrymen to remember the days of old and the years that are past, and to be slow to yield to the logic even of a legitimate resentment, when it bids them break with the great tradition of national Christianity, of a Christianity too catholic in range for sectarian expression, too humane in temper for sacerdotal control. Some, perhaps, and surely neither the least virtuous nor the least thoughtful, will respond to that appeal by a protest. The very suggestion of such intimacy between the Gospel and the World will disconcert and alarm them. A canonized monarch, an earthly Kingship which is confessedly Christian, a State which utters itself also

as a Church—these are descriptions which to their minds carry the suggestion of a paradox which insults the reason and wounds the conscience of believers. For, they ask with indignant insistence, did not the Divine Founder repudiate in advance any version of His "Kingdom" which could permit such an intimacy with an earthly state? Are not these historical forms of Christ's Religion as national and legally established so many violations of His spiritual teaching, so many apparent and dangerous departures from the severe, unworldly, Divinely simple "Truth of the Gospel"? Can the Christian Church ever be free to ignore the Founder's deliberate protest, "My Kingdom is not of this world: if My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My Kingdom not from hence"? Let it be freely granted that this challenge is deeply rooted in the Gospel, and has won the admission of high and valorous souls in every age of the Church. He knows little of Christianity and less of Christian history, who will speak scornfully of the zealots for spirituality—primitive ascetics, solitaries and monks, Puritans of all names and types—who have striven through the centuries against the sinful and subtle spirit of complaisance and accommodation, which is the parasite of established creeds, and may too easily become the temper of a national clergy. Yet we must needs maintain that Puritanism, ancient and modern, is at best a partial and inadequate version of the Founder's teaching as to His Kingdom, and that, for intelligible and cogent reasons, the Puritan version of Christianity

becomes ever more partial and inadequate as time passes. For, in truth, two voices are audible in the New Testament, and both must be listened to and obeyed, by him who would yield a full obedience to the Divine Gospel. There is the Voice of Moral Protest, proclaiming a sharp antagonism between this world and the next, between the near and urgent interests of time, and the remoter interests of eternity, between the flesh and the spirit: and, along with this, there is the Voice of Divine Authority, asserting the universal range of the Gospel, demanding recognition in every sphere of human activity, prophesying a victory so complete that no fragment of God's universe shall lie outside the triumph of His righteousness. The one Voice declares that Christ's Kingdom is "not of this world," but draws its strength and the sanctions of its government from above; demands a frank and willing surrender of all secular interests which come into rivalry with the spiritual Citizenship; insists that "no man can serve two masters"; affirms with solemn exultation that "the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the Will of God abideth for ever." The other Voice proclaims a present Reign of Christ on the earth; refuses to let slip from His recognition any element of individual or social goodness: calls men to a spiritual rendering of their secular activities; foretells and requires such a moralization of human life that it becomes in every article of its complex civilization the slowly perfected instrument of Christ's complete and final victory. These Voices are not necessarily in contradiction, but assuredly their separate declarations are hard to combine and hold

together. Moreover, they do not always speak with the same clearness and insistence. Now the one prevails, and now the other. In the beginnings of Christianity, the Voice of Moral Protest rang clearest; and since the New Testament belongs to that earliest phase, an exceptional authority has ever seemed to attach to that conception of Christ's Kingdom as "not of this world" which colours the sacred literature. The Voice of Divine Authority, however, waxes louder and more confident as the Church moves forward on her appointed task. Little by little, with many failures, with dark intervals of reaction, with heavy clouds of local apostasy, through epochs of error and superstition, the Church succeeds in setting up on earth Christ's Kingdom of justice, purity, and love; and in proportion to her success the ancient antagonism between this world and the world to come, between the State and the Church, between civil duty and spiritual allegiance, ceases to retain meaning, and is replaced by a salutary and inspiring harmony. Of that harmony "Establishment" is the symbol, the prophecy, and in some degree the expression. A National Church represents, inadequately of course, but not untruly, the conquest by Christ of the general reason and conscience of a Nation: it is the public acceptance of a social Ideal, the outlining on the statute-book of the Divine Order, the projection on the horizon of human politics of a heaven-born Hope, which though its full satisfaction may not be gained here on earth, blesses men wondrously by the approaches, difficult and gradual, which they make towards it. The final victory of the Redeemer is

declared to be the fulfilment of all that men have striven for, and failed to gain. "The Son of Man came not to destroy but to fulfil." In the "new Jerusalem" we look to find, not merely ransomed individuals, but "new heavens and a new earth." The fruit of the civil and political movements of the race will be found there as well as the perfected characters of the saints. "And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory into it." A day will dawn on earth, when the bold legend which runs above the High Altar of Westminster Abbey, and seems to utter the moral of that proud ceremonial of coronation, which for centuries has there proceeded, shall be justified—"The Kingdoms of the world have become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ." In the exultation of this sublime assurance, however, let us not forget the dangers of the time. Christian civilization, that supreme blessing for which on this Festival we thank God, was no quickly gained, or easily won possession. Our national heritage of righteous government, of free citizenship, of ordered liberty, may be imperilled by carelessness, lost by cowardice. We may not dare to think that the prize of so long and valorous conflict can be preserved without vigilance and effort. So, through the chorus of praise, we must hear the note of warning. A national Church which is not the organ of a national Christianity is an unreality, perhaps even a fraud: and that disastrous state may be reached by the fault of the Church not less surely than by the fault of the Nation.

The Established position may be abused to serve

the interest not of national religion but of hierarchical pride, or of sectarian aspiration. The clergy may advance claims of their own, and force for them no slight recognition from the large patience and gradual action of a people, suspicious indeed and resentful, but hoodwinked and perplexed. So grievous may become the moral confusion, that against the system of the National Church there may be ranged even those spiritual forces which naturally and professedly are the buttresses of its establishment. We need not travel far into the past to find solemn warnings, writ large in the black letter of historic scandals, against the abuse of Establishment. But why turn to the past when the present is vocal with threatenings? Will any candid Churchman to-day deny that the main strength of the case for Disestablishment is drawn, not from the arguments of those who are avowedly seeking to de-Christianize English life, but from the alienation of the national conscience? The fate of the historic Church of England depends on this point, whether or not, even at the eleventh hour, the national conscience can be reconciled, and the national confidence recovered. A breathing space is given us by the state of politics, by the mere scale and perplexity of the practical problems raised by the process of Disestablishing and Disendowing the oldest and greatest of the national institutions, most of all by the repugnance which an ancient Christian nation cannot but feel when it is urged to disown its most sacred traditions, unlearn the language of its saints and patriots, strike the Cross of Christ from the Crown of its Monarch, and silence the voice of prayer

in the Council Chambers of its empire. Yes: a breathing-space has been given us. Shall we have the grace to use it?

APPENDIX

The late Bishop Creighton has some weighty observations on the meaning of Disestablishment in his Primary Charge, which has been republished in the volume "The Church and Nation." I extract a short passage:—

"There was a time in England when the State decided that national unity was only possible on the basis of religious uniformity. The State failed to secure uniformity, but discovered that outward uniformity was no longer necessary for political security and consequently withdrew from the attempt to secure it. The nonconformists, finding themselves driven by the State in a direction in which they conscientiously objected to go, raised the cry that the State ought not to meddle with religion. Their contention was absolutely true, so far as it meant that the State ought not to exercise any coercive power over the consciences of its subjects. It is absolutely untrue when it is pressed to the conclusion that, to secure this result, the State should be stripped of all connection with the religious life of the Nation. Yet this is the logical extreme which is being pursued It is even erected into an axiom.

"There is no political axiom which is, to me, more repugnant, because it degrades the conception of the State, which I, for one, wish to uphold at all costs. I know the axiom in its mediæval form, when Pope Gregory VII. laid down that temporal authority had its origin in the instigation of the devil, and drew the conclusion that spiritual authority was of necessity its master and director. I regard with suspicion any form in which such an opinion is revived. To me the institutions by which my country is governed are precious, and I should sorely grieve to see their claims on my allegiance diminished. I think that every man ought to be taught to regard his citizenship as something to be prized and exercised with a full sense of conscientious responsibility. I can think of nothing so tending to debase the ideal of the State as talk about 'freeing the Church from the bondage of the State.' This representation of the State as something inherently unholy, something stifling to spiritual aspirations, something from which the highminded man longs to be delivered, is very dangerous teaching, and indeed is not seriously meant. But Disestablishment, or, as I prefer to call it, the repudiation of a Christian basis of the State, would go far to give real vitality to such opinions. Deplorable as this result would be, I do not see on what grounds it could be deprecated by those who rashly raise so large an issue to gain such a trivial advantage.

"For it is a large issue which is raised when it is purposed that the English State should divest itself of its religious character. Religion will and must hold the chief place in the direction of the aspirations

on which national life is founded. It seems to me supremely unwise, for any motives of temporary convenience, to limit permanently the sphere of the State. It seems to me dangerous to insist that the State shall know nothing of principles but shall only be concerned with machinery. I believe that, even amid present difficulties, English politics gain enormously from the existence of a National Church ; and that the change in the discussion of important questions, and in the methods of government, which would follow on its removal, would be very large and far-reaching in its consequences. The tone and temper engendered by a body which feels that it is the guardian and representative of religion, and feels also its responsibility to the nation, as a whole, is a very calculable element at the present day, is increasingly necessary as a moderating and soothing influence, and is daily developing into greater consciousness of its national mission. After all, our English institutions depend more upon tone and temper in their use than upon their inherent merits. Disestablishment would work a more abrupt change in the principles on which national cohesion rests than any other alteration in our political system " (pp. 33-35).

II

OF DAILY SERVICES

[Several reasons have led me to select for consideration a matter which has taken a very prominent place in recent discussions of ecclesiastical affairs, viz., the duty of the English clergy as regards Daily Service. Every morning for some while past Morning Prayer has been duly read in St. Margaret's. One lady, and she not a parishioner, has constantly attended ; the service becoming practically a duet rendered by the clergy. If this be the case in the heart of an immense city, what can fairly be expected in the small country parishes? It would not be true to say that the hour —8 a.m.—was specially inconvenient, for at 10 a.m., when Morning Prayer is provided at the Abbey, scarcely any save a few sightseers, who are waiting to be shown over the Church, are commonly present. The situation is not peculiar to Westminster. For seven years I had the honour, as Vicar of Barking, of serving a great working-class parish, with a population of some 15,000 souls. The Daily Services were unfailingly provided, but practically, saving officials and one or two ladies, who, I always thought, could have been more Christianly occupied in domestic duties, not a soul attended. I held the office of Rural Dean for five years, and made myself acquainted as

a matter of duty with the circumstances of the divers parishes included in the Rural Deanery. Without exception there was the same report. Except for an Evening Service with music and, above all, with sermon, nobody, not officially or quasi-officially connected with the church, would attend Daily Services. It must be added that such private inquiries as I have made of my clerical friends, and such observations as I have been able to make when visiting in various parts of the country, lead to the same conclusion. If emphasis is laid on a personal experience, it is to be justified by the explanation thus disclosed of my right to discuss this question from a practical point of view. If we limit ourselves, then, to the practical aspect of the subject, it would be difficult not to think that, if the Daily Services ceased straightway throughout the country, there would be no appreciable privation inflicted on the people. There are, of course, other aspects of the subject, aspects of no slight importance, which ought not to be left out of consideration, but considered solely as a part of parochial organization Daily Services have no importance.]

THE student of Episcopal Charges might be pardoned if he supposed the regular reading of Morning and Evening Prayer to constitute the very "articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ" in English eyes. The Minutes of Evidence taken before the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline contain some emphatic declarations on this subject by prominent bishops. Partly, no doubt, their Lordships were influenced by a desire, natural enough under the circumstances, to create the impression that "law breaking" was no peculium of the High Church Party,

but an universal characteristic of the English clergy. Allowing something for this desire, we yet must recognize in their earnest language an element of genuine conviction. The Bishops hold that the daily reading of Morning and Evening Prayer in the Parish Churches is a matter of the first practical importance. The Bishop of Birmingham enlarged on the formidable mischiefs which, in his opinion, had flowed from the general neglect of Daily Services.

> "I am quite sure," he said, "that the neglect of the daily services has not merely been a great subversion and a personal loss of spiritual discipline and devotion, but that also it has meant a real upsetting of what I should understand to be quite a fundamental element in the pastoral system of the Church of England. . . . . I do not think it would be possible to exaggerate how that neglect of the saying of the daily services has been not merely the neglect of a particular rule or the breaking of a particular law, but has been the upsetting and abandonment of a whole principle ; so that in place of a church open and in constant daily use, and of a clergyman resident and engaged in regular devotions on the spot, you have had substituted a church open once a week or on one day a week besides the Sunday probably, and a clergyman resident at a distance, and coming with more or less frequency according to his conscientiousness to visit a parish in which he is not, for obvious and necessary reasons, in constant attendance." (Q. 14919).[1]

The Bishop of Oxford, whose sympathies were wholly with the views thus expressed, and who has since published similar views in a Charge to his diocese, asked *more suo* whether Bishop Gore did not

[1] NOTE.—The Bishop forgot that pluralities and non-residence were ancient and prevalent scandals of the Mediæval Church, and never attained within the Reformed Church of England anything like the same standard of abuse, or of prevalence.

"regard that omission of daily service as a serious obscuring of the whole presentation of religious life in a parish which the Prayer Book puts before us." The reply was all that the questioner could have desired.

> "I should most strongly. I think that the Preface of the Prayer Book about the daily continuous public reading of Scripture, the continuous public recitation of the Psalms, and the stress it lays, even in what we should regard as such exceptional circumstances as on board the King's ships, upon daily service, with specially added prayers, morning and evening, shows what exceeding stress the authors of the Prayer Book intended to lay upon the offering of daily worship and two daily services as a very essential part of the system of the Prayer Book." (Q. 14929.)

Bishop Talbot, then of Rochester, now of Southwark, was not less decisive. He quoted his own Charges at great length on this subject, and really seems to have persuaded himself that there exists a popular demand for Daily Services. The clergy in any case ought to exert themselves to create it, wherever it does not yet exist.

> "I am thinking of what is true of town parishes, and specially of those of the humbler class. You will agree with me that the first need is to form the little nucleus of devoted, simple-hearted, worshipping Christian people which may be a 'hot-centre' to the life and work of the parish. This little company will contain several kinds; but surely one group, recruited perhaps in part from *those who, in any service but that of their Saviour might be accounted ineffectives*,[1] will maintain round their pastor the daily intercession of the parish." (Q. 17932.)

Bishop Creighton, in his primary Charge to the clergy and churchwardens of the diocese of Peter-

[1] Here and elsewhere the italics are mine.

borough in 1894, spoke in much the same way. Perhaps it would be difficult to find the case for Daily Services more effectively stated.[1]

> "The daily saying of Morning and Evening Prayer in Church is of great importance. Again, I know all that can be said by one who prefers to say them privately, because he is hopeless of being joined by any of his parishioners in Church. *But the fact remains that you are directed to say them in Church, unless you are reasonably let or hindered: and the absence of others is certainly no hindrance to you.*[2] But I would call your attention to some definite points of practical value. You are trying to teach your people to pray; can you be doing your best if you do not bring it before them as a privilege, which you yourself enjoy to exercise? You may go about your parish and exhort to prayer: you may pray with the sick and those in calamity; but you will best enforce your lesson by your example. The sound of the bell, especially when the listener knows that it is being rung by your own hands, if it does not operate as a summons, is yet a reminder, and brings a message of consolation and encouragement. It is well that you should pray with your people; it is well that they should know that you also pray for them. And I think there are few cases in which daily prayers are said in Church, where a few pious souls do not gather occasionally after a time.
>
> "There are also other reasons of much importance for daily services—reasons which affect the usefulness of a country clergyman. It is of great service to himself that he

[1] Bishop Creighton, however, when he was himself a parish clergyman neither read daily services, nor said the Athanasian Creed (*v. Life and Letters*, I, 161, Il. 69, *cf.* 427). Mrs. Creighton says that "he was too much impressed by the knowledge of how hopeless it would be to get any one to come to them (daily services), and said that he would wait to start them till his own family was old enough to form a congregation." His parish had a population of "about 1700."

[2] The solitary reading of Common Prayer as expressed in services which throughout assume the presence of a congregation is not without difficulty. Bishop Stubbs suggested that the shortened service permitted by the Act of 1872 should be used. [*v. Visitation Charges*, p. 226.] But the length of the services is not excessive. Mattins may be reverently read in half an hour, and Evensong in an even shorter time. It hardly seems worth while arranging for the public provision of less than this.

should have some regular and fixed points in his daily work in his parish. It is inevitable from the nature of the clergyman's duties that they should be left to his own discretion, and that the times of their performance should be at his own choice. The first thing that every man ought to strive to do is to be a law unto himself, and to economize his time by the formation of habits for its allotment. The existence of fixed times for daily Morning and Evening Prayer is a great help, and enables him to adjust other things accordingly. A regular hour for Church leads to a regular visit to the school. For the same reason it is a great help to his people. It vastly increases his accessibility, which is a matter of no little importance. Villagers are often shy; and many, who wish to see you, will not go so far as to call upon you through a dread of clothing their question with undue importance in the eyes of others; but if they know that you are almost always at Church at fixed hours twice a day, they know where and when you can easily be found, and have a means of familiar intercourse which nothing else can give.

"Again, the fact that you show yourself to have definite duties at definite hours assimilates your life to theirs, and makes the nature and aim of your work much more comprehensible to their minds. They can understand that a man is caring for them in very deed when they see him daily going regularly to the Church and the school, so setting before them the unmistakable outlines of a life devoted to prayer and teaching."[1]

The Bishop of Stepney did not scruple to tell the Commissioners that the rubric which requires daily service "involved not so much a principle, of doctrine, or of practice, as *the real ideal of the English Church for its parish clergy*." (Q. 20,154.)

It is probably right to discount these episcopal utterances by the official position of their authors, and by the occasions on which they were made. Decency demands that a bishop shall attempt to justify the laws he is required to enforce, and edification is best

[1] *v. The Church and the Nation*, pp. 113–115.

served by clothing a legal rule with as much religious significance as possible. It will be evident, however, that most of the excellent consequences described as flowing from obedience to this particular rubric have no real or necessary connection with it, and some alleged benefits are more suggestive of sentimental rhetoric than of a practical discussion. The matter really comes to the twofold question of legal obligation on the one hand, and of practical utility on the other. I propose to examine these two aspects of the subject with some care.

I. The Legal Obligation of Daily Service.

The rubric as it stands in the Prayer Book runs as follows:—

> "Though it be appointed, that all things shall be read and sung in the Church in the English Tongue, to the end that the congregation may be thereby edified; yet it is not meant, but that when men say Morning and Evening Prayer privately, they may say the same in any language that they themselves do understand.
>
> "And all Priests and Deacons are to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer, either privately or openly, not being let by sickness or some other urgent cause.
>
> "And the Curate that ministereth in every Parish Church or Chapel, being at home, and not being otherwise reasonably hindered, shall say the same in the Parish Church or Chapel where he ministereth, and shall cause a Bell to be tolled thereunto a convenient time before he begin, that the people may come to hear God's Word, and to pray with him."

That is the shape which the rubric received at the last revision of the Prayer Book in 1662. If we refer to the earlier Prayer Books we shall find that some

important changes have been made by the Restoration legislators. In the first Prayer Book of Edward VI. (1549) the rubric had been limited in its application :—

> "Neither that any man shall be bound to the saying of them (*i.e.*, Morning and Evening Prayer), but such as from time to time, in Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, Parish Churches, and Chapels to the same annexed, *shall serve the congregation.*"

This form of the rubric preserves the congregational purpose of daily service, which the later forms disregard. We may suppose that the exemption of clergymen not actually "serving the congregation" from the duty of reading the services had been abused, and it is well known that the services themselves were at first extremely unpopular with all those sections of the people which disliked the Reformation. Accordingly, in the second Prayer Book of Edward VI. (1552) the rubric expressly limits the exemption to those who had specific reasons to advance for declining attendance at the daily services :—

> "And all Priests and Deacons shall be bound to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer, either privately or openly, *except they be letted by preaching, studying of divinity, or by some other urgent cause.*"

In this form the rubric was repeated both in the Elizabethan Prayer Book of 1559, and in James I.'s Prayer Book of 1604. It conciliated the Puritan prejudice against the service, and recognised the superior claims of preaching and study, on which, not always quite sincerely, they were wont to enlarge. In Bishop Cosin's "Notes on the Book of Common Prayer," inserted in an interleaved Prayer Book of

the year 1619, and probably written at various times in and after that year, there is a long and important comment on the rubric as it then stood. In view of the circumstance that Bishop Cosin was almost the dominating influence in the revision of the Prayer Book at the Restoration, it will be worth our while to extract this note :—

> "So that we are also bound, *as all priests are in the Church of Rome*, daily to repeat and say the public prayers of the Church. And it is a precept the most useful and necessary, of any other that belongs to the ministers of God, and such as have cure of other men's souls, would men regard it, and practise it a little more than they do among us. *We are all for preaching now; and for attending the service and prayers appointed by the Church for God's worship, and the good of all men, we think that too mean an office for us;* and therefore, as if it were not worth our labour, we commonly hire others under us to do it, more to satisfy the law, than to be answerable to our duties. *Here is a command that binds us every day to say the morning and evening prayer;* how many are the men that are noted to do it? It is well they have a back-door for an excuse to come out here: *for, good men! they are so belaboured with studying divinity and preaching the word, that they have no leisure to read these same common prayers;* as if this were not the chief part of their office and charge committed unto them. Certainly, the people whose souls they have care of, reap as great benefit, and more too, by these prayers, which their pastors are daily to make unto God for them, either privately or publicly, as they can do by their preaching; for God is more respective to the prayers which they make for the people, than ever the people are to the sermons which they make to them. And in this respect are the priests called God's remembrancers, because they put God in mind of His people, desiring Him to keep and bless them daily with things needful both for their bodies and their souls. *And whatsoever the world makes of it, no doubt but God hath a greater regard to the prayers of His priests, men that are near Him, and appointed for the offering up of that daily sacrifice, than to the prayers of other common Christians whatsoever.* . . .

"As we are common Christians we should go to our prayers three times a day; 'At evening, and morning, and at noonday will I praise Thee.' But as we are specially separated from other Christians to be priests and prophets, we should go to them seven times a day, 'Seven times a day do I praise Thee.'"[1]

It will be seen that this note is inspired with a marked contempt for the Puritans, and a conception of the Christian Ministry which can only be described as intensely sacerdotal. Cosin was a very great man, and deservedly ranks among the most illustrious of Anglican bishops, but he was a thorough-going partisan in the great controversy of the seventeenth century. The revisers of the Prayer Book in 1662 adopted his view that the rubric required an explanation "against them that account themselves reasonably letted by any common and ordinary affairs of their own." He proposed an adoption of the rule in the Scottish Prayer Book, which made the bishop of the diocese judge of the reasonableness of hindrances to obeying the rubric. The revisers, however, preferred to insert the words "not being let by sickness or some other urgent cause."

The history of the rubric has some bearing on the question of its legal obligation, for the rubric, even in its present form, is ambiguous, and, when ambiguity attaches to a statute, it is legitimate to seek from history any light that it may be able to give. What are we to understand by "privately"? Does it mean "elsewhere than in church" or "alone by himself"? For the services in question are quite unsuitable for

[1] *v. Cosin's Works.* vol. V., p. 9–11, Lib. of Anglo-Catholic Theology.

solitary use, and solitary devotions were contrary to the whole spirit of the English formularies. The canons of 1604 may be accepted as evidence of the mind of the English Church. They are silent as to Daily Services, while they insist on the regular performance of Divine Service on Sundays and Holydays (Canon 13–14) and on the reading of the Litany on Wednesdays and Fridays (Canon 15). In any case it would seem that the Litany days must be excepted, since their due observance, implying a previous reading of Morning Prayer, is specifically ordered by a separate rubric :—[1]

> "Here followeth the Litany, or General Supplication, to be sung or said after Morning Prayer upon Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and at other times when it shall be commanded by the Ordinary."

Moreover the Ornaments Rubric is not favourable to the notion that Daily Service may be said anywhere but in church :—

> "The Morning and Evening Prayer shall be used in the accustomed place of the Church, Chapel, or Chancel: except it shall be otherwise determined by the Ordinary of the Place."

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[1] In 1640 Bishop William presided over a Committee, representing both the Laudian and the Puritan Divines, which considered the proposal, "Instead of Morning and Evening Prayers, to read them only on Wednesday and Friday morning, and in the afternoon on Saturday, with holyday eves." Nothing came of this suggestion at the time, but the Commissioners of 1689 included it in their abortive scheme for altering the Prayer Book. They suggested that the Rubric should run thus:—"And all priests and deacons that have cure of souls shall exhort the people of their congregations to come frequently to prayers on week-days, especially in the great towns, and more particularly on Wednesdays and Fridays, at least for the reading of the Litany. And where a congregation can be brought together the Ministers shall give their attendance for saying of Morning and Evening Prayer."

In truth the Prayer Book, in spite of its special rules for colleges and cathedrals, can hardly be said to contemplate any but parochial clergy, for the Ordination vows exacted of every clergyman presuppose parochial work. It must be supposed, therefore, that the rule which permits a "private" saying of the Daily Services applies only to those parochial clergy who are not "curates," *i.e.*, who are unbeneficed. All "curates," *i.e.*, incumbents, must go to church, and there say the Daily Service, unless hindered "by sickness or some other urgent cause." This rule, however, has never been generally observed until recent times, and even now, after two generations of official pressure, there are some four or five thousand parishes in which the rubric is disregarded. If we ask whether the honest clergyman ought to regard himself as bound *in foro conscientiæ* to say Morning and Evening Prayer in church, or, if unbeneficed, either in church or elsewhere, I suppose it must be answered that this is precisely one of the many rubrics of which the moral obligation is in inverse ratio to the legal requirement, one of the obsolescent, if not obsolete, rules of the Prayer Book. Once grant that such distinctions must be made between rubrics, which are all in legal theory equally binding—a supposition which every reasonable man cannot fail to make, and which, in point of fact, every clergyman does make—and it cannot be seriously contended that this particular rubric, merely because it is simple, and in some quarters popular, has necessarily any binding force. Two great conditions of obsolescence are recognisable when we consider the rubrics. On

the one hand, all those rubrics are obsolete, or in the way to become obsolete, which express a conception of the clerical office which no longer obtains acceptance. On the other hand, all those rubrics are obsolete, or in the way to become obsolete, which assume social conditions which no longer exist. These two sets of circumstances overlap and merge into one another, but they are properly separable, and had best be considered apart.

The rubric which requires the clergy to read the Daily Services "privately or openly" plainly belongs to a class of regulations which marked the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and extended to every part of the clerical career. It must be remembered that the standard of knowledge and of morals among the clergy of the Reformed Church was for a long time deplorably low. The pressing problem which the Government had to solve was how to man the Church tolerably. With a crowd of illiterate, disaffected, and often disreputable, men in the parishes, the only method of securing the performance of the bare minimum of professional duty was exact regulation, constant espionage, and severe penalties. A good example of ecclesiastical method is provided by the Injunction of Elizabeth in 1559. The sixteenth of these runs thus:—

> "Also, That every parson, vicar, curate, and stipendiary priest, being under the degree of a master of arts, shall provide and have of his own, within three months after this visitation, the New Testament, both in Latin and in English, with paraphrases upon the same, conferring the one with the other. And the bishops and other ordinaries by themselves or their officers in their synods and visita-

tions, shall examine the said ecclesiastical persons, how they have profited in the study of holy scripture."[1]

Strype published from Archbishop Parker's papers some "Interpretations and further Considerations" of these Injunctions, which disclose the profound mistrust of the parochial clergy which filled the minds of the bishops. The "curates" are treated as if they were wilful and ignorant schoolboys. There is real importance in remembering that the authors of the rubric ordering Daily Service held such a view of the parish clergy as is implied in these rules :—

"That at the archdeacon's visitation, the archdeacons shall appoint the curates to certain texts of the New Testament to be conned without book; and at their next synod to exact a rehearsal of them.

"That there be some long Catechism devised and printed for the erudition of simple curates. . . .

"That young priests or ministers made or to be made, be so instructed, that they be able to make answers according to the form of some catechism to be prescribed. . . ."[2]

James I.'s "Directions concerning Preachers," issued in 1622, appear to identify "learned men" with "bishops or deans at the least," in spite of the fact that a parish priest, Richard Hooker, had recently published what even then was perceived to be the greatest of Anglican Apologies. The canons of 1604 perpetuate for the clergy the mediæval practice of regulating clothes and behaviour by precise rules. Those parts of the Anglican system have indeed everywhere fallen into desuetude; yet it may be questioned whether they are really remoter from modern modes of thinking than the rubric which directs every clergyman to say the Morning and

[1] *v. Cardwell's Documentary Annals*, vol. I., p. 218. [2] *v.* Ibid., p. 236.

Evening Prayer every day "either privately or openly." While thus the parochial clergy were held, probably with justice, in great contempt by their official superiors, they continued to possess much of the social importance which had marked their mediæval predecessors. A careful examination of the rubrics and canons, which direct the clergyman's performance of professional duty, will disclose a situation which has no exact modern counterpart. Perhaps the best description of the effect of these rules, as understood by a singularly devout and conscientious clergyman, is that contained in George Herbert's famous and beautiful little treatise, "A Priest to the Temple" which bears date in the year 1632, although not published until twenty years later. The functions of magistrate, lawyer, relieving officer, and doctor are combined with those of the clergyman in the Laudian conception of "the Country Parson." To some extent the dominating position of the curate was reflected in the church where he ministered. There the local magnates met to carry on local government; there all mandates of the Sovereign were officially issued; there offenders were put to public penance; there the parishioners naturally resorted for all information on public affairs. The parish churches in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. were, no doubt, too often the scenes of profanation, and the victims of a brutal fanaticism, but they held a larger place in the interest of the people than at any time since the Reformation. All these considerations are relevant to any serious examination of the question, whether or not moral obligation attaches to obsolete or

obsolescent rubrics, whose legal force may be unquestionable enough.

We have anticipated much that might be said as to the change in social conditions, which has taken place since the rubrics were enacted. It certainly was the case at one time that the daily services, where they existed, reflected rather the wishes of the parishioners than of the clergy. A case in point is provided by an entry in the Vestry Minute Book of S. Margaret's, Westminster, under date October 12th, 1698:—

> "Whereas several inhabitants of this parish of S. Margaret, Westminster, have applied themselves to the Rev. Nicholas Only, D.D., and desiring that prayers may be read in the parish church once every day in the week—viz., at six of the clock in the evening, *they offering to raise by subscription a competent allowance for the same without any abatement from any former subscription*, which request the said Dr. Nicholas Only hath represented to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster and likewise to this vestry, who have condescended to the same provided that the subscribers will defray the charges thereof."

It is noteworthy that the notion that Dr. Only, as "curate" of the parish, was legally bound to read the Daily Services does not seem to have occurred either to himself, or to the vestry, or to the Dean and Chapter. Canon Overton has collected a good number of cases in which the Restoration bishops attempted to enforce the rubric, and the clergy to carry it out, but the evidence does not seem to amount to more than that a section of the Church adopted Cosin's view of the rubric, and made great efforts to educate public opinion in the same direction. The mere fact that "it was not unusual for pious people to leave bequests

to parishes, on condition that daily service was performed" seems to show that the legal obligation was not taken for granted, but rather the abnormal character of the practice, which made it reasonable to assume that, apart from special payment, the clergy were not likely to adopt it. The religious people of the Caroline epoch were eager, as they have never generally been since, for the Daily Services; and we are told that "short morning prayers" were commonly said daily in the churches at an early hour in the seventeenth century. There is certainly nothing in the facts to justify the notion that such tremendous importance was in the past attached to the mere saying of Morning and Evening Prayer by the clergy, apart from the "service of the congregation," as now marks episcopal utterances on the subject, nor can such importance be justified by the rubric itself when considered in the light of Anglican history. Is it the case that the practical utility of the Daily Services is so great that the question of legal, or even of moral, obligation to obey the rubric falls into a quite secondary position?

II. The Practical Utility of Daily Service.

Against the incidental advantages dwelt upon with so much earnestness by the bishops there are to be set some not unimportant considerations. When we analyse the reasons why Christian people have generally abandoned the old regard for the Daily Services, it will

perhaps be found that those reasons are neither slight nor base. That there is any special force or value in prayers said in church rather than elsewhere, or by the clergy rather than by other Christians, is a notion, explicitly affirmed, indeed, by Bishop Cosin, and more or less consciously held by most "High Churchmen," but none the less essentially un-Christian and irrational. Its general disappearance from Christian minds has destroyed much of the case for Daily Services. Moreover, in the twentieth century the public reading of the scriptures and recitation of the psalms do not retain the educational value, which could be claimed for both in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Let anyone read contemporary descriptions of the English people in those ages, such, for example, as that contained in Cranmer's Answers to the Devonshire Rebels, or in Baxter's account of his ministry in Kidderminster, or even, to come to a later time, which yet is far enough from our own, in Wesley's record of his evangelistic campaigns, and it will be obvious that scarcely any of the labouring classes could even so much as read, but were wholly dependent on public ministrations. The chained bible in some of our older churches might as fairly be put to its ancient use, and the people expected to gather eagerly to the public reading of its time-worn pages, as the Daily Services be revived with any expectation of the public attendance. With well printed bibles and Prayer Books in every house, and purchasable for a few pence, it is idle to dwell on the extreme value of the regular public reading of the scriptures. Change

of conditions has invalidated a once cogent argument for daily service. If the case be argued on a higher ground, and the Daily Services be urged as a part of the honour which all men owe to their Creator, and all religious men profess to recognize, then it cannot be doubted that objections emerge from within the very sanctuary of the deepest piety of our time. Men do not really think any longer that the Almighty is thus most honoured ; rather they grow impatient of the old emphasis on formal religious acts. The Christian conscience is much more sensitive than once was the case on all matters of social duty, and the service of God is more and more understood as expressing itself properly in a just and unselfish manner of living. Bishop Cosin could combine with his emphasis on Daily Services a revolving delight in the persecution of the Nonconformists, who, to use his own words, were "ferreted out of every hole by the train-bands of the city"; but modern Christians can find no sympathy with either position, the exaggerated estimate of formal observances on the one hand, or the persecuting zeal for orthodoxy on the other. Both sentiments have waned and will pass away together.

In this state of opinion, the extreme emphasis laid by the bishop on the rubric which orders Daily Services would seem to be particularly unfortunate. On the one hand, it tends to drive a wedge between the clergy and the conscientious convictions of their most seriously religious parishioners. When in sermons and in private discourse the duty of attending Morning and Evening prayer is pressed on the people, such measure

of success as is obtained is dearly purchased. Those who, in deference to their pastor's exhortations, attend in the churches, will not be the wisest or the best of his people ; and the constant and public association of religion with procedures, which have an archaic and artificial aspect, and with persons who, in the view of their neighbours, are "ineffectives," is not helpful to the cause of religion itself, nor advantageous to the rightful influence of the clergy. The indispensable task of the modern Church is, in the manly words of St. Paul, "by the manifestation of the truth to commend itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God," and nothing can be more unfavourable to the successful performance of that task than the habit of insisting on points which do not command, and do not deserve to command, the sanction of the conscience and reason of plain men. Nor can it be left out of reckoning that, in the scheme of clerical duty, there is great danger that "services" shall take a place altogether disproportionate to their true importance. Surely the Reformers were on the right track when they set on record their belief that "preaching and studying of divinity" were forms of Divine service even more deserving a Christian minister's attention than the reading of Morning and Evening Prayer. Often, perhaps ordinarily, there will be no conflict between these duties ; wherever, as in most urban parishes, there is a staff of clergy, this would seem to be the case ; and every experienced clergyman will recognise for himself and his colleagues the disciplinary value of the daily service, and, though this is easily exaggerated, its incidental parochial

convenience; but let us be on our guard against a tendency which, under colour of exceptional piety and severity of life, exalts the lower elements of clerical duty at the cost of the higher, and encourages among us fundamentally false conceptions of the ministerial office and of Christian worship.

III

OF CONFIRMATION

[Some years ago the nature of this Ordinance was brought sharply under my notice by an incident which greatly disturbed me at the time, and finally led me to reconsider the whole subject, and greatly to alter my views with respect to it. A Scotch Presbyterian, who was my personal friend, sought to receive the Holy Communion at the church which I served. Persuaded, as most Oxford-bred clergymen are, that an unconfirmed person might not communicate at an English Altar, I was in some perplexity. Knowing well the excellence of the individual I could not hesitate to administer the Sacrament, but I conceived it my duty the following week to explain my sentiments on the subject of confirmation as a necessary preliminary to communion. My explanation was received in the kindest way, and our friendship was in no respect interrupted, though no further attempt to receive the communion was made. In the course of last year my friend wrote to me on the subject, and I returned the following answer. It is printed here as a serviceable exposition of the reasons which have led me to think that a discussion of con-

firmation would not be unserviceable or at the present juncture untimely.

MY DEAR ——.

You are abundantly entitled to seek from me a statement on the subject of your letter. It happens that I have preserved a copy of the letter which I addressed to you ten years ago; it was a letter which perplexed me much at the time, and set me on the consideration of the matters with which it dealt. That consideration led undoubtedly to a distinct change of opinion with respect to the bearing of the rubric appended to the Confirmation Service on the question of the communion of Presbyterians. In my letter of 1896 I expressed myself thus :—

> "The rubric at the end of the Confirmation Service admits of but one sense :—'There shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion until such time as he be confirmed or *be ready and desirous to be confirmed.*' I am aware that there are clergy in the English Church who can reconcile their consciences to the breach of this rubric. I am not of the number, but I should be very willing privately to submit the point for the Bishop's decision if you so wished and, of course, I should have to do so, according to the rubric, if—which I should greatly regret—the unhappy necessity were laid upon me of formally refusing the Sacrament."

Even with these opinions, however, you will remember that, when you presented yourself at the communion rail, I had administered the Sacrament, conceiving myself thereto obliged as well by the law as by the friendly relation which then, as now, existed between us.

I am convinced that the confirmation rubric is not designed as a declaration of fundamental principles, but as a domestic rule of the Church of England binding none but its members. This was the view

expressed by the late Archbishop Tait, and by other high authorities. In December, 1901, I wrote an article in the *Contemporary Review* in which I declared my own adhesion to that view. Perhaps I may reproduce my own words:—

> "The rubric in the Prayer Book ought not to be regarded as asserting a principle of universal application, namely, the necessity of episcopal confirmation as the preliminary to the reception of the Holy Communion, but as the domestic rule of the Church of England, to which its members must conform as the condition of being admitted to the full privileges of members. Every Church which allows infant baptism, must have some means of securing that the baptised are morally and intellectually qualified for Holy Communion . . . .
>
> "Confirmation by the bishop, following upon such instruction as the parish priest elects to give, provides all the security we have in the Church of England. Non-episcopal confirmation among the Greeks and Lutherans, other ceremonies designed with similar views, and involving more or less careful preparation, among the Presbyterians and Nonconformists, serve the same ends. Under due disciplinary safeguards provided by suitable authority with reference to circumstances, I would urge the admission of communicants from the orthodox non-episcopal Churches to communion in the National Church.
>
> "It has, indeed, been pointed out to me that there is no means of preventing such communion now, since it is the generous practice of the Church of England to admit to the Sacrament all who present themselves, throwing the entire responsibility of approaching the Lord's Table on those who do so, asking no questions and interposing no difficulties. This is certainly the case; but the Church of England has a very stern doctrine of the guilt of unworthy communion, and, as we have seen, the literal and accepted understanding of the rubric prohibits the communion of the unconfirmed. The result is that, while speaking generally, the more religious and sensitive Nonconformists either refrain from presenting themselves or state their circumstances in advance to the clergy, and are advised not to come, the less desirable and conscientious do not scruple to avail themselves of our laxity. It is difficult to defend such a system as this,

although I confess to an extraordinary reluctance to abridge the existing liberty of unquestioned approach. But in any case I am sure that by recognizing, as we ought to recognize, the right of the communicants of the non-episcopal churches to communicate at English altars, we should provide the basis for some restoration of discipline when that great matter shall be taken in hand. We have to choose between intercommunion based on negotiation with the non-episcopal churches, which implies their recognition, and an implicit repudiation of their ecclesiastical character, which renders us wholly defenceless against the profanation of unworthy communicants."

I wrote thus in 1901, and certainly the five years which have gone by since have confirmed me in the general attitude thus defined. Perhaps I should express myself even more decisively on the right of communicant members of other churches to communicate at Anglican altars, and somewhat less decisively as to the risks of the present practice. Certainly my estimate of the Church of Scotland grows higher as I form the acquaintance of its clergy, and see something more of the actual working of its system. I have enjoyed the privilege more than once of preaching from its pulpits, and I resent greatly the legal impediments which are alleged to prohibit me from enabling the congregations of the Abbey and St. Margaret's to listen to some of the Scottish preachers. If the opportunity is given me I shall gladly communicate at the altar of the Church of Scotland, and I trust it needs no saying that I shall gladly welcome to the altars which I serve those communicants of that church who will to approach.

Believe me, most sincerely yours,

H. HENSLEY HENSON.]

THE attempt has been made, and constantly renewed within the Church, to define exactly the

spiritual gift which is conveyed to the individual in confirmation. How mistaken and futile that attempt is may be sufficiently shown by some obvious considerations. If the sacramental view, elaborated in the mediæval theology, be adopted then everything turns on the due performance of the rite, and wherein that due performance consists there has been no agreement in the Church. Is it in the use of holy oil, as among the ancients, and among Easterns and Latins always? Then all Protestant Confirmations are invalid, for no oil is used.[1] Is it in the laying

[1] To escape these consequences the mediæval canonists identified the two acts of unction and imposition of hands, and emphasized the vital importance of *episcopal* consecration of the chrism.

> "If, nevertheless, a laying on of hands is held to be essential to communicate the effect of the Church's corporate prayer, such a laying on is universally allowed to be given in signing with chrism: (1) because chrismation involves direct contact with the hand of the administrator, and indirect contact with the hand of the consecrator of the chrism; and (2) because by the benediction the effects of prayer and fasting have been imparted to the chrism, and are through it conveyed to the person confirmed. . . . The Western Church anoints the brow only, the rest of the body having been already anointed at baptism. The Greeks, who administer baptism and confirmation together, anoint the eyes, ears, mouth, and nose, and at one time anointed also the breast, the hands, and the feet." (*v.* Reichel, *Complete Manual of Canon Law*, p. 53. London. 1896.)

Such solemn trifling as this explains, but, of course, does not justify, the ribald jests of the Puritans on the mediæval doctrine and practice. In Archbishop Benson's Biography there is a curious illustration of the confusion arising from the varying practice and theory of the Churches. On Sept. 28th, 1888, he writes in his Diary: "The Bishop (*i.e.*, Bishop Blyth of Jerusalem) consults me as to confirming children who have received the Greek Chrism at their baptism as infants. The ritualists abuse him if he confirms them, the C.M.S. if he does not. The Greek Bishops do not object to his doing so, but if we do, we really in our own minds ignore the Greek form, while they permit it only because they hold ours to be no confirmation at all, and if we administer it, knowing this, we condemn our own. I have advised him to regard

on of episcopal hands? Then all Eastern and Lutheran Confirmations are invalid, for they employ presbyters in this ministry. If, however, the non-sacramental view be accepted, and emphasis be placed on the deliberate action of the individual, accepting with due knowledge, intelligence, and freedom the obligations of Christian discipleship, then most part of the Church can never have been in any true sense "confirmed" at all, for it is beyond dispute that the ancients confirmed infants, as the Easterns do still, and the mediæval Church either did not confirm at all, so great was the laxity of ecclesiastical administration,[1] or confirmed at so early an age that it were

them as confirmed, but to have a service with them of 'admission to Holy Communion,' and to give them his blessing, distinctly informing them that this is not confirmation." (*v.* Vol. II., p. 224.)

[1] Peckham's Constitutions at Lambeth [A.D. 1281] clearly indicate that a large proportion of the faithful were unconfirmed. "Many neglect the sacrament of Confirmation for want of watchful advisers, so that *there are many, innumerable many, who want the grace of Confirmation*, though grown old in evil days. To cure this damnable neglect, we ordain that none be admitted to the Sacrament of the Lord's Blood and Body that is not confirmed except at the point of death, unless he have a reasonable impediment." (*v. Johnson's Canons*, part II., p. 277.) It could hardly have been otherwise when the sees were left vacant on the demise of Bishops for long periods, while the King seized the revenues. In Henry II.'s reign the great diocese of Lincoln had been vacant for nearly nineteen years: this was a bad case, but it could be paralleled in other dioceses. This notorious neglect to provide for the administration of a "Sacrament," theoretically indispensable, was pressed by the Reformers against the Romans. Thus Calfhill answering Martiall [A.D. 1565] writes thus:—"Confirmation is extended unto all: gracious and graceless; come who will, none is denied it. Who gave you authority? Where is your commission to bestow that indifferently upon all persons, which the Apostles gave but unto few? Indeed, if it be so necessary to salvation as ye make it, I cannot greatly blame you. But then, on the other side, blame you I must, that you are so negligent in bestowing it. For this is your doctrine—that without Confirmation there can be no perfect Christian. And I beseech you, how many be suffered to die unconfirmed? Unless the Bishop chance to pass by, which is once

abuse of language to suppose free and intelligent action in those who received the rite. If, finally, the attempt be made to infer the nature of the gift received by the observed consequences of Confirmation, then it would seem that we are shut up to the single universal consequence, namely, admission to the Holy Communion, for it cannot be denied that in those churches where the practice of Confirmation has been laid aside, as in the Presbyterian churches of Scotland and America, there is no observable moral inferiority, nor can it be truthfully said that among those who receive Confirmation devoutly (for the profane must obviously be left out of reckoning) there is any secure or recognisable connection between Confirmation and any moral consequences. The young Nonconformist, who professes himself converted, and on the basis of that confession is received into the full fellowship of his church, does not in point of fact appear to exhibit any moral inferiority to the young Anglican, who, with the best will in the world, and after due instruction, has been confirmed and received among communicants. Such considerations do not pretend to be exhaustive, but they suffice to disallow the con-

peradventure in seven years; all they that depart in the mean season are Jews, belike, or in state of damnation. And can your charities suffer, without remorse of conscience, so many semi-Christians to pass you? Thus every way you confute yourselves" (*v. Calfhill's Answer to Martiall*, p. 218. Parker Society). At a later period the Jesuits belittled Confirmation because they desired to hinder the appointment of a Bishop to have jurisdiction over the English Roman Catholics. (See Taunton's *History of the Jesuits in England*, p. 411 f.) Burnet commented on this: "All those of the Roman Communion among us have now no confirmation, unless a Bishop happens to come amongst them. And therefore it is now a common doctrine among them, that though confirmation is a sacrament, yet it is not necessary" (*v. Exposition of Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 355. London. 1845).

stantly renewed attempts to define some specific, august, and, if words mean anything, indispensable, Divine Gift as bestowed in the rite of Confirmation.[1] A striking example of such definition is provided in Canon Mason's well-known book on "The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism." It would be worth any one's while to read thoughtfully through the section which treats of "The Gift of the Holy Ghost," and then to set beside it, for contrast and criticism, the sobering facts of Christian experience. When we are told that the gift of the Holy Ghost belongs in so special and unique a sense to Confirmation, that, notwithstanding all previous operations of the Holy Ghost upon the soul, "*the baptized but unconfirmed believer may, unless the Divine action departs from its ordinary course, be truly said not to have received the Holy Ghost*," we have an uncomfortable suspicion that the author has frankly parted company with Christian experience, and is indulging in the futile but fascinating practice of purely theoretical system-making. When again the writer presses into the

[1] Even Canon Masterman, whose contributions to current theology are marked by a refreshing sanity, cannot set himself free in this particular from a thoroughly vicious tradition. No objection need be taken to his comparison of "Confirmation" to "Ordination," for in both cases the one indisputable effect of the ecclesiastical rite is to admit to a definite position carrying certain functions; but when he goes on to distinguish between the Gift of the Spirit in Baptism, and that in Confirmation, and to say of the latter that "the Spirit becomes a more distinctly personal Presence, transforming the individual life in proportion to its willingness to be so transformed," he is using language which carries no clear or serviceable meaning. The presence of the Holy Spirit can never be impersonal; nor can it be supposed that any individual life, with or without Confirmation, will be transformed by that presence apart from the co-operation of the individual will (*v. I Believe in the Holy Ghost*, by J. Howard B. Masterman, M.A. Wells, Gardner and Co. P. 66).

service of his exalted sacramentalism the touching words of St. Paul in Ephesians iv. 29, "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God in whom ye were sealed unto a day of redemption," and speculates on the effect which "the indwelling of the Holy Spirit," effected *ex-hypothesi* in the individual by Confirmation, must have on "*the Divine Inmate Himself*," we marvel at the mental attitude disclosed hardly less than at the painful, though of course unintentional, and even unconscious, irreverence of the language. We could wish that the learned author had remembered for his own guidance the comment which he most justly passes on the Roman Catholic Divines. "The whole treatment of the subject by later Roman hands is an instance of the way in which the figurative, sometimes half-playful, nomenclature of the early Church has been stiffened into cumbrous dogma."[1]

A thoughtful American Divine has pointed out the persistence, and the mischiefs, of the Latin theory of grace as "a subtle quality conveyed to man from without through material agencies," and he ascribes the origin of this theory to the powerful mind of Augustine. "In Augustine's thought, redemption did not lie in the power of the Incarnation, or in the personal influence of the present living Christ. To baptism and other sacramental channels was confided the operation of a quality which was known as grace—a quality or force which, infused into the soul, would enable it to rise above the dominion of sin, and abide in union with its Creator."[2]

[1] P. 421.

[2] P. 251, Allen, *Continuity of Christian Thought*. Ward, Lock, and Bowden. 1895.

He insists on the exclusively Latin origin of this conception. "The doctrine of grace as a *specific influence* passing from God to the individual spirit through external channels or in some arbitrary way—of such a doctrine, it must be admitted, the early Greek theology knew nothing."[1] Whether this be the case or not, no student of the New Testament, whose study is not embarrassed by sacramentalist pre-suppositions, will find in its pages this mechanical notion of "grace." Nor, when we remember the apostolic language about baptism, and the invariable association of that sacrament in the apostolic age with acts of faith and repentance, which cannot be supposed in any but adult persons, can we be in any doubt that the extravagant exaltation of Confirmation, and the precise definition of the spiritual gift therein conveyed, which are now common among Anglican Divines, argue a strange and melancholy departure from the spirit of the New Testament. It cannot seriously be argued that English Churchmen are under any necessity to embark on this perilous ocean of speculation. Rather it would appear from an examination of the standards of Anglicanism that the Reformers were careful to separate themselves decisively from the current doctrine about the Confirmation-Gift, and to protect the reformed Church as far as they could from superstitions which they had learned to recognize and despise. The XXVth Article expressly denies that Confirmation is a Sacrament; and the Order of Confirmation itself is prefaced by a declaration emphasizing the personal profession of the

[1] *v. Ibid.*, p. 16.

candidates, and limits the episcopal action to prayer and the laying on of hands, omitting significantly the anointing which, according to the mediæval doctrine, was the "matter" of the "sacrament," and which, throughout the Eastern churches, replaces the laying on of hands. These declarations and changes were very deliberate. Confirmation has no mean place in the grand controversy with Rome which fills the record of the Reformation, and it may fairly be maintained that the denial of any *specific* gift through the laying on of hands is the definite teaching of the Fathers of the Church of England. They laid great stress on catechising, and regarded Confirmation as the decent, public recognition of those, as full members of the Church, who had demonstrated their competent knowledge of the faith, and had publicly testified their personal belief. The Blessing of Confirmation, they taught, resulted from the prayers of the bishop and the congregation, and the laying on of hands was no more than (in Hooker's phrase) "a ceremony betokening our restrained desires to the party, whom we present unto God by prayer."[1] Confirmation was, indeed, one of the points on which all Protestants were in principle agreed. The line of defence taken by the bishops against the Puritans was to insist on the express repudiation of the sacramental character in the rite, which marked the Anglican doctrine, and to ground everything on considerations recognized as weighty by all Protestants, viz., those of common sense, ancient practice, apostolic analogies,

[1] *v. Eccl. Pol.* Ch. lxvi., Bk. V.

and ecclesiastical order. Archbishop Whitgift, for example, answers Cartwright thus:—

> "You know that Confirmation now used in this Church is not to make baptism perfect, but partly to try how the godfathers and godmothers have performed that which was enjoined them when the children were baptized; partly, that the children themselves . . . . may . . . . ratify and confirm the same. . . . You add: 'As though the Bishop could give the Holy Ghost.' The Bishop may use the ceremony used by the Apostles, that is 'imposition of hands,' and may safely say this godly prayer contained in the book. . . . *Of any other kind of giving the Holy Ghost there is no mention in that book.*"[1]

In spite of these explicit explanations the Elizabethan bishops showed great reluctance to administer Confirmation, even according to the order in the Prayer Book. They were embarrassed and alarmed by the eagerness with which in some parts of England the people crowded to receive the rite,[2] and they

[1] *v.* "Works," Vol. III., p. 494. (Parker Society.)

[2] *v.* Jeremy Taylor. "Works," Vol. XI., p. 231, ed. Heber. "Time was in England, even since the first beginnings of the Reformation, when Confirmation had been less carefully ministered for about six years, when the people had their first opportunity of it restored, they ran to it in so great numbers, that Churches and Churchyards would not hold them: insomuch that I have read that the Bishop of Chester was forced to impose hands on the people in the fields, and was so oppressed with multitudes, that he had almost been trod to death by the people, and had died with the throng, if he had not been rescued by the civil power."

Bishop Hall, "Works," Vol. IX., p. 462, bears similar testimony with respect to the West of England. "It cannot be spoken with what fervour and violence of desire that people were wont to sue for this sacred ceremony. What fair-like confluences have we there seen of zealous ambients! How have we been tired with the importunity of suitors, impatient of either denial or delay! How have we been oppressed with the throngs of the multitude, striving for the first admission! Insomuch as we have been forced to call for the help of officers to our rescue from that well-meant impetuousness."

Hall was Bishop of Exeter from 1627 to 1641. This promiscuous administration of a rite which they regarded very justly as implying a

sympathized deeply with the apprehensions of the Puritans, whom they were driven against their will to coerce. Strype records the case of Robert Cawdry, Incumbent of Luffenham, who was deprived by the Ecclesiastical Commission for depraving the Book of Common Prayer, and who at once appealed against his sentence to Lord Burleigh in a letter in which he alleged in his own behalf the example of the Bishops themselves :—

> "For that the Bishops punished most rigorously godly Ministers (whom they could not justly touch either with false doctrine or any misbehaviour in life) for not observing the Book of Common Prayer ; and *yet they themselves, for the most part these twenty-nine years had not observed it:* . . . . in not confirming of children as the book appointed ; and yet by that order, they that were inferior Ministers were charged, that they should not admit any to receive the Communion, until such time as they were confirmed by the Bishop. Whereby they fell into two extremes, either to offend God, or the book ; for if they were able to examine themselves, and give a reason of their faith, they, the Ministers, might not deny them the Communion ; but the book said otherwise. Now, seeing they omitted this, because they knew it was a Popish ceremony, and not warrantable by God's Word, he demanded, then, with what conscience they could deal so hardly with them for leaving out some ceremonies more superstitious and offensive than this."[1]

This was in 1587 when the Elizabethan settlement may fairly be thought to have taken firm root.

solemn profession of personal Christianity was a sore offence to the Puritans. It is almost pathetic, in view of the events which so soon happened, to find Laud reporting to the King in 1639 that in the Diocese of Peterborough the people came to the Bishop "very thick to receive Confirmation, to the number of some thousands." No statistics are more misleading to those who collect and regard them than the statistics of religious work.

[1] *v. Life of Bishop Aylmer*, ch. viii.

Cawdry, of course, represented the irreconcilable Puritan, but his thrust at the bishops was not undeserved. Hooker is not less explicit on the point of episcopal neglect.[1] In 1591 Whitgift found it necessary to issue to the bishops of his province a letter "for the better observance of catechizing and confirming of youth" couched in very urgent terms. In this letter he again emphasizes the character of the rite as *a formal certifying of knowledge gained by catechetical instruction*, and is significantly silent as to any "Gift of the Holy Ghost" therein conferred :—

> "This ancient and laudable ceremony of confirming children, in respect of a carefulness in fathers to have their children instructed, that afterward they might be confirmed, hath heretofore wrought much good where it was used. I am very sorry to hear that my brethren the bishops of my province of Canterbury do so generally begin to neglect to confirm children, at least to call for, and exact the use both of it, and of catechising children in the Church by the Minister, and of parents to send their children, and to come thither themselves. . . .
>
> "I do also hereby require at your lordship's hands to give warning unto the ministers of your diocese, that they cause *such children of their parish only that can say the catechism to be brought from time to time* unto your lordship to be confirmed ; not only when you visit triennially, but also at other fit opportunities for such a purpose, as, namely, when you travel abroad in the diocese to preach, and on market-days when you reside and make your abode in any market town, whither the people of parishes thereabouts do usually resort."[2]

How necessary this insistence on knowledge of the Catechism was, may be gathered from Baxter's account of his own Confirmation a generation later.

[1] *v. Eccl. Pol.*, bk. V., ch. lxvi., 8.
[2] *v. Works*, vol. III., p. 610.

"In the bishops' days"—he was writing in 1658—"some few of them were confirmed: in the country where I lived, about one in ten or twenty, and what that was, and how it was done I can tell you, by what I once made trial of. When I was a schoolboy, about fifteen years of age, the bishop coming into the county, many went to him to be confirmed: we, that were boys, ran out to see the bishop among the rest, not knowing anything of the meaning of the business: when we came thither, we met about thirty or forty in all, of our own stature and temper, that had come for to be *bishopped*, as then it was called: the bishop examined us not at all in one article of the faith; but in a churchyard, in a haste we were set in a rank, and he passed hastily over us, laying his hand on our head, and saying a few words, which neither I nor any that I spoke with understood; so hastily were they uttered, and a very short prayer recited, and there was an end. But whether we were Christians and infidels, or knew so much as that there was a God, the bishop little knew, or inquired. And yet he was esteemed one of the best bishops in England. And though the canons require, that the curate or minister send a certificate that children have learned the catechism; yet there was no such thing done, but we ran of our own accord to see the bishop only; and almost all the rest of the county, had not this much: this was the old, careless practice of this excellent duty of confirmation."[1]

Baxter was a thoroughgoing Puritan, yet to him Confirmation is "an excellent duty." He believed, and he had good reason for believing, that in principle all sections of the Protestant world were, with respect to this Ordinance, at one. He wrote his admirable treatise on "Confirmation" as an eirenicon. "Here," he said, "is a medicine so effectual to heal our breaches, and set our disordered societies in joint (being owned in whole by the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Erastian, and in half, by the Anabaptists), that nothing but our own self-conceitedness, perverseness, laziness, or wilful enmity to the

[1] *v. Works*, ed. Orme, vol. XIV., p. 481.

peace of the Churches, is able to deprive us of a blessed success."[1] The point of agreement was *the necessity of a profession of faith from everyone "that layeth claim to church-privileges and ordinances proper to adult members."* On this he said, "I find no controversy." Such profession, he argued, must be understanding, serious, voluntary, and not nullified by a contradiction in word or deed. So far all, even "the latter sort of episcopal Divines," were agreed. He discussed the nature of Confirmation, and would even allow its sacramental character, though in a lower sense than that of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. By a Sacrament in this lower sense, he meant "any solemn investiture of a person by ministerial delivery, in a state of church-privileges, or some special Gospel mercy." "Christ, by His ministers, doth first by Baptism invest us in our church-state and infant privileges and by Confirmation confirm us in our church-state; and invest us with a right to all the privileges of the adult." He was careful to protest against the misrepresentations of the Papists, who in that time of religious confusion were more than commonly active :—

> "The Papists quarrel with us, and curse us in the Council of Trent, for denying their ends of confirmation, and making it another thing. But they falsely describe our opinion: *we do not take it to be a mere catechizing, or receiving the catechized to the Lord's Supper, or to a higher form; but we take it to be the approbation of the personal profession of them that claim a title to the church-state, and privilege of the adult, and an investing them solemnly therein, upon the solemn renewal (and personal adult entrance) into covenant with God.* Now in this renewed

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 403.

covenant, as they give up themselves to Christ afresh, and personally engage themselves to Him, and renounce His enemies, owning their infant-baptism, when this was done by others in their names; so God is ready on His part to bless His own ordinance, with the collation of that corroborating grace, which the nature of the renewed covenant doth import. . . . So that the Papists shall have no cause to say that we needlessly, or erroneously, deny either the name of Confirmation, or the true use and ends of it, or the notional title of a Sacrament to it in a larger, yet not the largest, sense."[1]

He would have a register of confirmed persons kept in every parish.[2] Those who had been admitted to communion without confirmation he would not require to be confirmed.

"And I do not think it fit, that any that have been already admitted to church-communion in the Lord's Supper, should be now called out to confirmation, by imposition of hands; though where there is just cause to question their knowledge, faith, or lives, they may by the pastor be called to give an account of them, and put upon a clearer profession than they have yet made; but surely when they have been admitted to the Lord's Supper, by any regular ministry and church, they are to be taken for adult members, till they are justly cast out, or do cast out themselves. For the more perfect doth include the less perfect in it."[3]

So far, at least, Baxter believed that he could carry all Protestants. He confidently appealed to the Prayer Book as bearing him out.

"And here I shall entreat the moderate, godly persons among us, that are of the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, or Erastian judgment, yea, and the first and second sort of Anabaptists, to consider how nearly we are all agreed, or how near to an agreement, when we are not aware of it, or live at such a distance, as if we were not aware of it; *and whether it be not our duty to close upon*

[1] *v. Ibid.*, p. 452. [2] p. 478. [3] p. 479.

> *this practice, at least much nearer than we are.* It is a sad and fearful case, when men professing godliness, and all pretending to a love of unity, peace, and holiness, shall hate or oppose each other, and separate from each other, upon a pretence that we differ in things that we are not agreed in ; and when such shall persuade the common enemies, and the ignorant people, that we differ where we do not ; as if the enemy had not already matter enough of reproach against us, nor the ignorant matter enough of temptation and offence, but we must falsely give them more, by seeming to differ when there is no such thing."[1]

So Baxter wrote in 1658, just a century after the accession of Elizabeth. It is extremely important to insist upon the fact that he was justified in his main contention. The doctrine of the Church of England with respect to Confirmation is better stated in his treatise, from which we have been quoting, than in any other document of the time. Jeremy Taylor and even Bishop Hall are less satisfying, and less satisfactory. In view of the great practical importance of the subject, it will be well to adduce a few representative Anglican opinions. Archbishop Whitgift and the Prayer Book have been already quoted. Hooker expresses himself more vaguely than usual, and is more concerned with a not unnatural contempt of such bigotry as that which we have already considered in the case of Cawdry, than with a statement of the truth which that bigotry refused to recognize ; yet his teaching falls fairly into line with that of his Anglican contemporaries. The essential points are those which Baxter afterwards emphasised—*the personal profession of faith by a duly instructed Christian, and the limitation of the blessing to the effect of the prayers of bishop*

[1] p. 512.

and congregation. The conspicuous omission is that insistence on some specific and most important gift of the Spirit, conveyed solely by the imposition of episcopal hands, which now commonly predominates in the Anglican teaching about Confirmation, and which has changed the Ordinance from a peace-making influence in Protestantism into a cause and symbol of acute strife. Too soon, indeed, this unfortunate perversion attracted Anglican divines, and coloured Anglican politics. The controversy with Rome during the Commonwealth wonderfully narrowed the English Church ; and when it returned to power on the flood-tide of a great political reaction, the Church of England crystallized in the legal settlement of its restored system not a few of the bitter prejudices which were born of conflict and trouble. It is surely high time that we rose above those evil tempers, and reconsidered in the light of Evangelical truth, of Anglican principles, and of Christian experience, the positions adopted at the Restoration.

None of the Elizabethan Divines has better claim to be accounted an authoritative exponent of Anglicanism than Bishop Jewell. His view of Confirmation is sufficiently expressed in the following passage :—

> "First, of Confirmation, which is so called because that which was done on our behalf in baptism is ratified and confirmed. . . . . When the children of the Christians were thus brought up, and had learned the religion of Christ and to walk in the ways of Godliness, they were brought to the Church, and by their parents presented unto the bishop, and yielded a reason of their faith openly, before the whole congregation ; they professed they would so believe, that

they would live and die in that faith. Then the bishop and all the people fell down on their knees and prayed unto God that He would continue the good thing He had begun; and the bishop, laying his hand upon them, commended them unto God. This was the ratifying of the profession which they made by others at their baptism, and for that cause called confirmation."[1]

"The first abuse in confirmation was, that it was done in a strange tongue, that no man might understand what was meant; then, that they received to confirmation such children, and so young, as were not able to make profession of their faith; so that the infant promised he knew not what; and the bishop ratified and confirmed where there was nothing to be confirmed; he set to his seal where there was nothing to be sealed. These abuses were far unmeet for the Church of God. Again, they say confirmation is more honourable than baptism; because any priest may baptize; but confirmation is given only by a bishop or a suffragan. So they do give a greater pre-eminence to confirmation, which is devised by man, than to the holy sacrament of baptism, which Christ Himself ordained. I need not speak more hereof; the error is so gross, so thick, so sensible and palpable."[2]

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[1] The Anglican Reformers were so convinced that they were but restoring the system of the Primitive Church, that they often read back into the primitive records the original features of their own policy. Their knowledge of antiquity was inadequate, and their historical sense immature at best. They did not realize the extent and grossness of primitive superstition, of which selections from the greater writers of the Nicene Age gave no indication. With respect to Confirmation they were equally confident and mistaken in their appeal to primitive practice. Dean Plumptre said truly that "of what may be called the modern Protestant idea of Confirmation, as the ratification by the baptized child, when he has attained an age capable of deliberate choice, of the promises made for him by his sponsors, *there is not the slightest trace in Christian antiquity.*" [v. "*Dict. of Christian Antiquities*, vol. I., p. 425.] Yet this is unquestionably the doctrine of the Prayer Book.

[2] In justice to the Roman Church it must be said that the vicious theory of Confirmation is largely neutralized by the care bestowed in catechizing with a view to the "First Communion." The Reformation did this service to the Roman Church, that it taught the value of catechizing. Accordingly, the practice of the modern Roman Church, at least in England and America, does not lie open to the vehement denunciations of the Reformers. Indeed, there are many Protestant

"Now a word or two of the bringing up of children, and preparing them to confirmation. Wherein I would God the old order were duly observed, that they were instructed perfectly to know religion and their duty to God; and so might be brought before the congregation, and make an open profession of their faith. . . . .

"The whole standeth in knowledge, and in the fear of God; that they may know God, and walk before Him in reverence and fear, and serve Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life."[1]

This doctrine is plainly identical with Baxter's. The most authoritative of Elizabethan Anglicans and the most representative and influential of Caroline Nonconformists are, with respect to Confirmation, absolutely agreed.

testimonies to the relative superiority of the Roman system. I will but refer to two, both of them American.

Stanley Hall. *Adolescence, its Psychology*, vol. II., p. 265 ff. New York. 1905.

Gladden. *The Christian Pastor and the Working Church.* Edinburgh, 1898.

"At the present time the fidelity and thoroughness with which Roman Catholic children are taught by their pastors the doctrines of their Church utterly put to shame the negligence of the descendants of the Reformers. It can no longer be said that sacramentalism paralyses the teaching power of that Church. Roman Catholic children, as a rule, are far better instructed with respect to the doctrines of their Church than most Protestant children are; they know what they believe, and they know why they believe it; they can give a reason for the faith that is in them. It is time that the Reformed Churches, whose system rests on instruction, had taken up the weapons which have been thrown away, and had returned to that work of training the young, without which all their splendid machinery of parochial and missionary organization will produce little else but noise" (p. 337).

It must not, indeed, be forgotten that the clear-cut dogmatism of the Roman Church is a great didactic convenience, *before the reasoning faculties are developed, or knowledge acquired.* Afterwards that dogmatism is a calamitous disadvantage, which goes far to explain the melancholy alienation of thoughtful and educated men from Christianity, wherever Christianity is represented by the Roman Church.

[1] *v. Works*, Part II., p. 1,124 f. (Parker Society.)

Jewell died in 1571. In 1587 Thomas Rogers published an Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles, which was re-published in quarto in 1607. Wood describes him in highly laudatory terms, and, as he was chaplain to Bishop Bancroft, we may assume that he was thought a very good Churchman. He sets forth what he supposed to be the primitive doctrine of Confirmation in these words, and, of course, claimed that the Church of England followed the primitive model which he thus conceived :—

> "Touching confirmation, the sentence and judgment of the true church is that rightly used, as it was in the primitive church, it is no sacrament, but a part of Christian discipline, profitable for the whole church of God. For the ancient confirmation was nothing else than an examination of such as in their infancy had received the sacrament of baptism, and were then, being of good discretion, able to yield an account of their belief, and to testify with their own mouths what their sureties in their names had promised at their baptism ; which confession being made, and a promise of perseverance in the faith by them given, the bishop by sound doctrine, grave advice, and godly exhortations, confirmed them in that good profession ; and laying his hands upon them, prayed for the increase of God his gifts and graces in their minds.

Then he proceeds to enumerate the "errors and adversaries unto this truth." Among these he reckons the doctrine that the minister "must be a bishop and none inferior minister," and that "the Holy Ghost is given in full." He calls these, *which are the assumptions of much modern Anglican teaching*, "dangerous and very damnable doctrine."[1] Baxter would have found no fault with the teaching of Bishop Bancroft's

[1] *v. Rogers on the Thirty-Nine Articles*, p. 252 f. (Parker Society.)

Chaplain. Bishop Hall (1574-1656) holds a high place in the estimation of English Churchmen. After reading through carefully his treatise on "The Apostolic Institution of Imposition of Hands for Confirmation,"[1] I can find no difference between his teaching and Baxter's as given in the more elaborate treatise to which we have referred above. He also attributes the spiritual "life and vigour" of the ordinance to "the zealous prayer of the godly pastor and congregation," and he takes up great part of his space in quoting and endorsing the views of the continental divines. The modern Anglican will reflect with regretful wonder on the change for the worse, which has passed over the relations of the Church of England and the other churches of the Reformation, since a leading Anglican Bishop could write in this way:

> "But that we may not think the Church of England though more eminent in this point than *her other sisters*, goes alone in her judgment and practice of confirmation by imposition of hands, let us see the free and full astipulation of other famous divines and churches to her in both these."

Then follow the opinions of the foreign Reformers, with special emphasis on that of Calvin, "whose authority is justly wont to sway so much with all reformed churches."

Of the earlier Caroline divines the most attractive, perhaps, and, in his own day, one of the most influential, was Henry Hammond (1605–1660), and to him Baxter not rarely refers in terms of special regard and appreciation. His writings are still well worthy of an

[1] *v. Works*, vol. IX., pp. 457–484, ed. Wynter. Oxford. 1863.

English clergyman's study. He belonged to the Arminian school of theologians who had risen to power with Laud and shared his defeat. He still, like the earlier and severer divines to whom we have referred, emphasizes the prayer of bishop and congregation as the great instrument of the Divine Blessing in Confirmation.

> "The bishop's prayer being thus, by virtue of his office, offered up, and having the suffrages of the whole congregation to join with it, and being commenced to God for that boon (the Spirit), which He hath promised to grant to our importunity, it may most reasonably be presumed to be of force and efficacy with God to bring down that grace which may enable to will and to do, on all that come duly qualified to receive it.
>
> "To which I may add, that this being designed by the Church to certify those that are thus confirmed of God's favour and gracious goodness toward them, it hath all the advantages that either hope of acceptance and reward, or a grateful sense of mercies received can add to it, to engage and oblige us to a constant obedience to Him."[1]

No serious Protestant would take exception to that doctrine about Confirmation. Thorndike (1598-1672) was a Churchman of a very different type. He had no sympathy with Baxter's ardour for ecclesiastical harmony, and his learned writings are inspired by a hard, attorney-like spirit which seems designed to sharpen edges and widen differences. Still, even his contentious pages contained something to which Baxter could appeal as promising a basis for agreement. His clear statement of the necessity of a personal profession of faith as preliminary to Communion, and his association of that profession with

[1] *v. Minor Theological Works*, p. 178. Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology.

Confirmation, separate his attitude decisively from the sacramentalism of Rome and the Tractarians.

> "Now that all are baptized infants, how necessary it is, that Confirmation should pass upon them, before they come to receive the Eucharist, I need not dispute; *both sides acknowledging, that as well the trial of their knowledge, as the exacting of their profession in Christianity, is a thing due unto them from the Church.* And, therefore, in the Church of Rome, where this substance of the office is not provided for, it is little more than a shadow: professing unity with the Church by seeking the Bishop's blessing but neglecting the reason, for which the unity of the Church is provided by God for the salvation of a Christian; to wit, the exacting and allowing of his Christianity."[1]

We may conclude this list of Anglican authorities with Burnet, whose *Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*, published in 1699, long ranked as an ecclesiastical text-book. The laying on of hands by the Bishop in Confirmation, he says, "is only a designation of the persons so prayed over, and blessed, that God may seal and defend them with His Holy Spirit." It is "only a gesture in prayer."

> "We do not deny, but that Christians began very early to use oil in holy functions; the climates they lived in making it necessary to use oil much, for stopping the perspiration, that might dispose them the more to use oil in their sacred rites . . . .
>
> The invention that was afterwards found out by which the bishop was held to be the only minister of *confirmation*, even though presbyters were suffered to *confirm*, was a piece of superstition without any colour from scripture."[2]

Burnet's work is said to have been carefully revised before publication by Tillotson and Stillingfleet, and

[1] *v.* Thorndike's *Works*, vol. V., p. 228. Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology.

[2] *v. Exposition*, p. 353, 354. London. 1845.

it may be accepted as expressing the general view of the English clergy until within recent years Tractarian Sacramentalism triumphed in the hierarchy.[1]

[1] It is obvious that the theory of Confirmation will determine the age at which it is thought well to administer the rite. Sacramentalists approximate to infancy; Protestants to manhood. Baxter thought that "commonly about 16, or 17, or 18 years of age, is the time when we have reason to expect that the baptized should seek the communion and privileges of the adult." Cosin says that "many are confirmed at seven years old," but adds his own opinion that "they should not be confirmed so young as they used to be, but when they are of perfect age, and ready to be admitted to Holy Communion, which is between 14 and 16 years of age." (*v. Works*, V., p. 488.) Evelyn had been a Communicant for more than a year before he was confirmed at the age of 19. (*v. Diary*, vol. I., p. 13. London. 1902). The Articles of Perth in 1618 ordered the catechizing of "all young children of eight years of age" and their presentation to the bishops to be blessed. (*v.* Spottiswoode, *History*, vol. III., p. 256.) Jeremy Taylor was an advocate for a very early age, and claimed that such was the rule of the Church of England, "that after infancy, but yet before they understood too much of sin, and when they can competently understand the fundamentals of religion, then it is good to bring them to be confirmed, that the Spirit of God may prevent their youthful sins, and Christ, by His word and by His Spirit may enter and take possession at the same time." He would insist on confirmation even after Communion. (*v. Works*, vol. XI., p. 290.) Newman held Taylor to be an "essentially untrustworthy" writer, but he thought him "correct" in his doctrine of Confirmation. (*v. Letters and Correspondence*, vol. II., p. 235.) Bishop Wilson "thought no greater injury can be done to religion than to suffer young people to come to confirmation before they know the reason of this service and have been well instructed in the principles and duties of Christianity." (*v. Works*, vol. VII., p. 8.) The Episcopal "Interpretations" added to Elizabeth's Injunctions (1559) lay it down "that children be not admitted to the Communion before the age of 12 or 13 years, of good discretion, and well instructed before." (*v.* Cardwell, *Documentary Annals*, vol. I., p. 238.) Grindal as Archbishop of York ordered in 1571 that "none be admitted to the Communion being above 14 years old, that could not say by heart the Ten Commandments and Lord's Prayer; nor none being 14 years old and upwards, that could not say by heart the Catechism." (*v. Ibid.*, p. 370.) Mason, in a somewhat tortuous note on the point, decides that since "the most characteristic purposes for which the Holy Ghost enters into souls appear to be chiefly connected with full age," and that "many of the Spirit's gifts would be useless to the babe," it seems therefore not unreasonable to defer the bestowal of them till they are actually wanted." (*v. Op. cit.*, p. 480.) The triumph of Tractarianism has tended to reduce the age of Confirma-

If, then, there be fundamental agreement between the Church of England and the other Protestant Churches on those elements of Confirmation which are independent of the one point (the episcopal ministry of the rite) in which they differ, ought it not to be within the range of possibility, nay, of easy attainment, that some agreement should be reached by which an effective mutual recognition could be in this particular arranged? We are all agreed to recognize the validity of Baptism as administered by non-episcopalians; no Protestant Anglican will hesitate to recognize the validity of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as administered in the non-episcopalian churches by those who, in the carefully-chosen words of the XXIIIrd Article, have "been lawfully called and sent . . . . by men who have public authority given unto them in the Congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard." Surely, then, all we can insist on as a condition of admitting baptized non-Anglicans to Communion is the assurance that, so far as the essentials of Confirmation are concerned, viz., public profession of faith after due instruction and formal admission to Holy Communion after the established rules of their own churches, they are confirmed. No insulting claim to superiority, no false and wounding sacerdotalism, no

tion Candidates, and with very unfortunate results. Bishop Thirlwall's opinion will perhaps approve itself to most thoughtful clergymen: "Since the advantages to be derived from the rite depend on the state of the candidate, and this again determined much less by his years, than by the preparation he has received, it may not be expedient to establish any inflexible regulation as to the age of admission; though as a general rule it may be desirable that none should be received before they have completed their fifteenth year." (*v. Charges*, vol. I., p. 23.)

unhistorical and profoundly irrational episcopal monopoly, are implied in the reasonable demand that any measure of inter-communion which we assent unto, shall not imply any lowering of the standard of responsibility in Christian membership. All Churches are concerned in finding a remedy for the standing injury to Christian charity and self-respect involved in refusing to admit to the Lord's Supper those who admittedly are the disciples of the Lord, and *in that character* desire to receive the Sacrament of Fraternity and Fellowship. In the case of some Churches there cannot be any pretence of a reason for doubting their fitness for fraternal recognition. The Church of Scotland is for many reasons the Church to which an English Churchman first turns in affection and expectation.

Does the Church of Scotland admit the baptized Christian to Communion without taking due security for knowledge of the Faith, and sincerity in its profession? A well-known Scottish Minister, who is a personal friend of my own, thus replies to this inquiry which I privately addressed to him :—

> "The practice of the Church of Scotland is to make its analogous rite to Confirmation the almost immediate preliminary to the first reception of Holy Communion. Some weeks before Communion the class for Candidates is announced, or the private instruction of individuals begins. It is aimed at to secure as nearly as possible that young children may pass directly from the Senior or Bible Class to that for Catechumens, although often a blank, unfortunately, does intervene, especially in the Highlands. In this class Sacramental teaching is carefully given ; and I enclose to you Dr. Norman Macleod's ' Manual for First

Communion.'[1] which is now, I think, the most widely adopted text-book. The basis of this teaching will be found in the Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the highly 'definite' Sacramental teaching of the Shorter Catechism. At the conclusion of this teaching it is usual for the Minister to recommend the now prepared Candidates to the Kirk Session for admission; and a date is appointed for the admission or Confirmation Service, at which, although the presiding Presbyter does not impose hands, it being opposed to the genius of Scottish observance to regard a manual act as an essential to the spiritual reality, the Holy Spirit is invoked on the Catechumens for the Confirmation of Baptismal Grace on the side of the Divine, and of the vows vicariously made at Baptism on the side of the Human. . . . . The Catechumens make a public Confession of Faith—usually in the words of the Apostles' Creed—and are formally 'admitted' and blessed."

Apart from the view that episcopal action is essential to the validity of the rite—and we have abundantly shown that Christian history and authoritative Anglican teaching agree in disallowing that notion—can any serious English Churchman deny that the essentials of Confirmation are here present, and that the whole legitimate demand for due securities of knowledge and profession are satisfied? Why then should there not be a frank relationship of mutual recognition by intercommunion between the Churches of England and Scotland? Create that relationship, and you have removed the weakness and scandal of religious division between those great Churches. Their denominational distinctiveness remains no longer as an obstacle to

[1] *The Lord's Supper: A Manual for First Communion*, by Rev. Norman Macleod, D.D. Edinburgh: R. and R. Clark. 1904. Price 1½d.

Christian fellowship, but as directly contributory to the richness and efficiency of the common Faith.

Is not this rightly to "maintain the Church's rule about Confirmation?"[1] To take the other course, refuse to recognize the validity of the Scottish practice, elevate into an essential what Christian history demonstrates to be no more than a detail, drive from the Lord's Table those who are professed and acknowleged servants of the Lord, what is this but to act as those Pharisees did, of whom the Lord said, that "they strained out the gnat but swallowed the camel?" The Church of Scotland naturally takes the first place in the thought of an English Churchman, but the principles illustrated by a covenant of inter-communion with that Church would carry also, by an apparent and irresistible logic, to the case of all other non-episcopalian Churches, established and non-established, which satisfied the conditions of such fellowship. Denominational distinctiveness within the covenant of inter-communion would involve no *necessary* breach of Christian Fraternity.

[1] *v.* The Spiritual Efficiency of the Church; the Primary Charge of Charles Gore, D.D., Bishop of Worcester, 1904. It is regrettable, but no wise surprising, to find this distinguished Prelate emphatically condemning any exemption from episcopal confirmation as a preliminary to Communion in the English Church. He pleads the Rubric, which, however, in my opinion he misunderstands.

IV

OF THE LIBERTY OF THE CLERGY IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH NON-CONFORMISTS

An incident in Yorkshire has brought into some prominence the question whether or not an English Clergyman is free, like other citizens, to accept an invitation to address a meeting in a Nonconformist Chapel. The facts, as stated in the *Times*, are these.

The Rev. P. D. Eyre, D.D., Vicar of All Saints', Scarborough, had promised to attend a Wesley Brotherhood service at a Wesleyan Chapel on Sunday, March 3rd, 1907, and to give an address to the members. On the Sunday morning, however, he received from his Diocesan, the Archbishop of York, an intimation that it would be necessary for him to obtain the consent of the incumbent in whose parish the Wesleyan Chapel was situated before carrying out his promise, otherwise his action would be "against ecclesiastical order." Dr. Eyre, on receiving this message, sent a letter to the Secretary of the Wesley Brotherhood cancelling his engagement. In this letter he said:—"I fear I have to acquiesce in the Archbishop's wishes, and it is certainly irregular to speak in the parish of St. Mary's without the incumbent's permission, a thing that never struck me." The Archbishop in a subsequent letter was careful to explain that his action "had nothing to do with Wesleyanism." "It was only a point of order about which I addressed you as to your intention to give an address, not in your own parish, but in the parish of one

of your brethren, and without his sanction." Finally, Dr. Eyre wrote again to the Archbishop, having apparently informed himself of the law, and explicitly denied that his action in speaking in an unconsecrated building without the incumbent's permission was contrary to law. "There is no law written or unwritten, which authorizes an incumbent to veto another incumbent from speaking in an unconsecrated building in the former's parish." He adds some observations which under the circumstances may perhaps be pardonable: "Doubtless there are people who are wondering whether, if a chapel had not been in question, this difficulty would have arisen. The public, who are, after all, in Yorkshire, fairly shrewd critics, regard the question of 'ecclesiastical order' as beside the point. If the address had not been proposed in a Wesleyan chapel nothing would have been heard of the matter, and no question would have been raised and no complaint would have been lodged with your Grace." This may certainly be allowed, for the practice of speaking in other public buildings or in the open air without first seeking permission from the incumbent is well-established among us, and there are few clergymen of position who have not so spoken at some time or other. The only point in question is connected with the status of Nonconformist Chapels on the one hand, and the rights of incumbents on the other. Does the law put a difference between the clergyman and the layman in this particular matter? That is the question which in the following paper is discussed.

I. The Law of the Matter.

It is commonly taken for granted that an English clergyman is acting illegally if he speaks, or preaches, or takes part in any public service, in a Nonconformist chapel. Many people, indeed, profess to lament the state of the law, as being plainly inconsistent with the tolerant opinions now prevailing in society on religious subjects, but they consider, and justly, that even an unsatisfactory law ought not to be broken, unless it can be said to wound consciences in some

manifest and unquestionable degree. This could hardly be maintained with respect to the prohibition, if such existed, of attending meetings in Nonconformist chapels, for Christian charity does not demand, though it would rejoice to possess, the liberty to do so, and the widest tolerance is not properly hindered by the most inconvenient and impolitic ecclesiastical arrangements. So strongly has this view of the situation impressed itself on the present writer, that he has never hitherto hesitated to refuse, though often with great reluctance, the many courteous invitations which from time to time have been sent to him by Nonconformists, who have wished him to preach in their chapels. In the case of Men's Meetings on Sunday afternoons there has, indeed, prevailed generally in London a tolerant custom, and this he has not scrupled to follow, never thinking it worth while to inquire where such meetings were to be held, whether in a schoolroom attached to a chapel, or in the chapel itself. It is evident enough that in very many cases the chapel is the more convenient meeting-place, and after consenting to give an address, it seemed absurd to make difficulties as to the place in which it should be given. This has been, to his knowledge, the custom of London with respect to Men's Meetings on Sunday afternoons. Similar tolerance has become customary with respect to the numerous extra-parochial, or inter-parochial Missions, often connected with colleges and public schools, which now form so conspicuous and so valuable an element of ecclesiastical life in London. Clergymen, as well bishops as lesser men, have often taken part in the annual

meetings of these Missions without reference to the local incumbents, and never, as far as the present writer's knowledge goes, with any offence to the religious public.

In spite of these exceptions, however, it remains the case that an impression is general that the law prohibits all public intercourse of a religious character between the clergy of the Established Church and Nonconformists, and that the clergyman who thus associates himself with Nonconformity is guilty of breaking the law. It will be universally allowed that, if this impression be well founded, its basis in law should be capable of clear and conclusive statement. Half the professed Christians in the country are Nonconformists, and there is an element of apparent and dangerous absurdity in forbidding the clergy of the National Church to hold religious intercourse with them. In any case such a prohibition ought not to be acquiesced in except under the plainest coercion of legal obligation, and then only on the clear understanding that an honest effort to change the law is being made by the responsible leaders of the National Church.

It is the present writer's belief, however, that this legal obligation cannot be satisfactorily made out, and that in point of law the clergyman is as free as any other citizen to speak or preach in a Nonconformist chapel, if the authorities of the chapel request him to do so. If this be not the case, it lies on those who maintain the contrary to produce the legal prohibitions on which they build their argument. Certainly there is nothing in the statutes of the realm which contains any such prohibitions; on the contrary,

legislation for a long time past has moved in the other direction. Nonconformists have gradually been relieved from every civic disqualification, and established in the possession of complete civil and political rights. Their chapels are as much recognized by the law as the churches; their ministers are, like the clergy of the Established Church, utilized by the State for sundry public purposes. They also are *ex-officio* registrars; they also serve as chaplains in the Army and Navy. It will not be seriously contended that the prohibition of religious intercourse between the clergy and the Nonconformists is required by any statute. It will, perhaps, be said that the Prayer Book is "a schedule of an Act of Parliament," and that the Prayer Book contains, or at least implies, such prohibition. The only possible justification for this contention must be found in the Ordinal. There are two questions in the service for the Ordering of Priests which may plausibly be adduced as relevant to the point in debate :—

> THE BISHOP. Will you maintain and set forwards, as much as lieth in you, quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people, and especially them that are or shall be committed to your charge?
>
> ANSWER. I will so do, the Lord being my helper.
>
> THE BISHOP. Will you reverently obey your Ordinary, and other chief Ministers, unto whom is committed the charge and government over you; following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions, and submitting yourselves to their godly judgments?
>
> ANSWER. I will so do, the Lord being my helper.

Everyone will admit that the promise to set forward "quietness, peace, and love among Christian people"

is not necessarily violated by friendly relations between clergymen and Nonconformists, and that there is no apparent contradiction between this Ordination vow and such conduct as that of Dr. Eyre. Does the vow of obedience compel the clergyman to set aside his own conscientious interpretation of his obligation to make peace and ensue it, and require him to follow a course of action which he seriously thinks to be inconsistent with prudence and charity? None will contend for an unlimited duty to obey. There are limits to the right to order. The admonitions and judgments must at least be "godly"; and who shall determine what in this connection "godliness" means? In the last resort, no doubt, there is a sphere within which the conscience of the superior must override that of the inferior; but that sphere is very narrowly limited. It does not extend over subjects which have been determined by the law; and if it be the case that the law is silent on the point of religious intercourse with Nonconformists, and concedes a liberty to the clergyman, it cannot be maintained that the Ordinary can have any legal right to settle what the law has left open, and to limit a liberty which the law bestows. "Godly admonitions" by the authorities of an Established Church must at least be legal; and their "godly judgments" must at least be capable of legal enforcement. So far, then, as the Ordinal goes, it leaves the question open. Neither incumbent nor Ordinary can diminish aught from, or add aught to, the law which binds them both.

The Archbishop of York was careful to speak of

"ecclesiastical order," and the phrase is most naturally interpreted as a reference to the canons. It will, perhaps, be worth while to examine the question how far the canons are relevant to the question in debate.

The canons of 1604 do not err on the side of obscurity or indecision. They are clear and vigorous enough, and if they could be accepted as authoritative, many questions which are discussed among us would be answered without delay. They were designed to bring into ordered agreement with the National Church every subject of the King, and they corresponded exactly to the state of the law at the time. Laymen, not less than clergymen, were properly subject to the canons, and though there were signs of restiveness among politicians of Puritan sympathies, and it would have been a rash thing even then to enforce them on any but the clergy, still, to quote Dr. Gardiner's words, "as far as in them lay, they bound down the whole of the clergy and laity of England to a perpetual uniformity." They were everywhere enforceable by excommunication, and that was no trivial or unmeaning penalty in the reign of James I. "The excommunicated person was unable to enforce the payment of debts which might be due to him, and was himself liable to imprisonment till he confessed his error."[1]

In order that the canons might be made known to all the people, it was expressly ordered (and for aught we know to the contrary the obligation is still resting on the clergy, though everywhere neglected) that every minister should read them publicly

[1] *v. History of England*, vol. I., p. 195.

"once every year upon some Sundays or holy-days, in the afternoon, before Divine Service, dividing the same in such sort as that the one half may be read one day and the other another day." What, then, is the requirement of the canons? and how far can that requirement be reasonably supposed to bind the clergy at the present time? A very few specimens will suffice:—

> V. Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, That any of the nine and thirty Articles . . . . are in any part superstitious or erroneous, or such as he may not with a good conscience subscribe unto; let him be excommunicated *ipso facto*, &c.
>
> IX. Whosoever shall hereafter separate themselves from the Communion of Saints, as it is approved by the Apostles' rules, in the Church of England and combine themselves together in a new brotherhood . . . . let them be excommunicated *ipso facto*, &c.
>
> XI. Whosoever shall hereafter affirm or maintain, That there are within this realm other meetings, assemblies, or congregations of the King's born subjects, than such as by the laws of this land are held and allowed, which may rightly challenge to themselves the name of true and lawful churches; let him be excommunicated, &c.
>
> XXVIII. The churchwardens or questmen, and their assistants shall mark, as well as the minister, whether all and every of the parishioners come so often every year to the Holy Communion, as the laws and our constitutions do require; and whether any strangers come often and commonly from other parishes to their church; and shall shew their ministers of them, lest perhaps they be admitted to the Lord's Table amongst others, which they shall forbid; and remit such home to their own parish churches and ministers, there to receive the Communion with the rest of their own neighbours.
>
> LXXIII. Forasmuch as all conventicles, and secret meetings of priests and ministers, have been ever justly accounted very hurtful to the state of the Church wherein they live; we do now ordain and constitute, That no priests, or ministers of the Word of God, or any other persons

> shall meet together in any private house, or elsewhere, to consult upon any matter of course to be taken by them, or upon their motion or direction by any other, which may in any way tend to the impeaching or depraving of the doctrine of the Church of England, or of the Book of Common Prayer, or of any part of the government and discipline now established in the Church of England, under pain of excommunication *ipso facto*.

There are no less than 141 canons, and we have but quoted five; the rest are hardly less suitable for our present purpose. They represent a state of law and of opinion which are so remote from our present systems of government and society as to be only intelligible by an effort of the imagination. Yet we hold that it is this code of Anglican Ecclesiastical Laws which forms the sole foundation for the prevailing impression that the clergyman is legally disqualified for religious intercourse of a public kind with Nonconformists.

What is the legal position of these canons to-day? How far can it be fairly argued that they have more than an antiquarian interest for anybody?

"It is unnecessary to say," remarks Sir Robert Phillimore, "that where these canons are in conflict with any statute, they are clearly inoperative." If that be so, it would seem to follow that every canon which pre-supposes the illegality of Nonconformity is ruled out. In 1604 Nonconformity was a grave civil offence; and the Convocation did but give ecclesiastical sanction to the settled policy of the State.

But for many generations the old dream of uniformity has been surrendered; and the law of England recognizes Nonconformists as frankly and fully as

other citizens. It would run counter to the very principles of our constitution to suppose that the inequalities deliberately abolished by statute should in some spheres of social life be perpetuated by canon. Schism may be in theory an ecclesiastical offence, but it is unknown to the law of England, and since the law of the English Church is identical with that of the English State, we must conclude that the Church has perforce returned to the Apostolic view of schism as a disloyal and self-asserting temper, very blameworthy in the Christian, but not specifically tied to any expression.

II. The Rights of the Incumbent.

The Archbishop of York was careful to make it clear that his objection against Dr. Eyre's action had nothing to do with the circumstance that the meeting which he had promised to address happened to be what the canons of 1604 called a "conventicle." His Grace was moved solely by the *disorderly* character of action which had not received the sanction of the incumbent of the parish. This raises the important and interesting questions, what may be the nature, and what the limits, of the incumbent's authority over his parish. "There is no general principle of ecclesiastical law more firmly established than this: that it is not competent to any clergyman to officiate in any Church or Chapel within the limits of a parish without the consent of the incumbent." This dictum of Sir Robert Phillimore, however, clearly has no application to the case of Nonconformist chapels, or to any unofficial

action of clergymen. It refers solely to buildings belonging to the Church of England, and actually under the control of the incumbent, and the ministrations in question are clearly those provided for in the Book of Common Prayer. The territorial jurisdictions of the clergy were once co-extensive with the country, but now they have been limited by various restrictions. Nonconformist chapels are not within the control of the clergy, whether parochial or diocesan; and it cannot be supposed that the clergy have rights of veto where it is plain that they have no rights of ministry. No one would contend that the consent of the incumbent was requisite before any other clergyman could make a political speech in a public hall, or deliver a lecture there, or give an open-air address on temperance in the parish. How, then, can it be argued that such consent is necessary when any of these things is arranged for within a particular kind of building, viz., a Nonconformist chapel? It can hardly be seriously urged that everything turns on the nature of the building, or on the subject of the address. That the incumbent's consent should be requisite before any other clergyman can officiate in the parish church, or in any chapel, consecrated or unconsecrated, which is connected with it, stands to reason. The basis of our ecclesiastical system is the parochial unit, and it would be intolerable that any clergyman should invade the church of another, or interfere with his sphere of ministry, without his leave. The argument from ecclesiastical order carries so far beyond question but surely it carries no farther. When Nonconformity was illegal no one, with or without the incumbent's

consent, could address Nonconformists; but now that Nonconformity is perfectly legal, and the Nonconformist chapel as much a public building as the parish church itself, so far, at least, as the free entrance of the public is concerned, and the legality of its existence, why should the clergy be under a disability which does not apply to others? What is the offence which they commit if they do as the rest of men? Is it an offence against faith, or against morality, or against discipline? Is the essence of their fault the schismatic character of the Nonconformists with whom they associate, or their contemptuous treatment of the incumbent, or their disobedience of the canons, or their disregard of episcopal directions? And what penalties are they exposed to if they run the risks of exercising their liberty? Is the aggrieved incumbent the right person to prosecute? or the bishop? or any zealot, layman or cleric? All such questions seem to compel the answer that there is no legal offence at all, and no invasion of anyone's rights, and no ground for any kind of prosecution. The clergyman who does not interfere with the functions of the incumbent, or thrust himself into his church, cannot be held to have intruded into his parish in any guilty degree; and assuredly the incumbent has no functions within the walls of a Nonconformist chapel. His rights cannot be supposed to outrun his duties. Rights and duties are inseparable.

III. The Question of Expediency.

When the question of right is clearly answered, there yet remains the question of expediency. "All

things are lawful for me," writes the great Apostle, and immediately adds that, "all things are not expedient." So with this matter of the clergyman's right frankly to hold religious intercourse, and that publicly, with the Nonconformists, always provided no interference with the rights and functions of others is involved, the most explicit affirmation of liberty must proceed with a full recognition of the circumstances which may, in any given parish, or at any particular time, make the exercise of that liberty inadvisable. The object of such public association with Nonconformists could only be the advancement of fraternity; but fraternity might even be hindered by the provocation of angry local controversy, or the creation of a vehement quarrel between neighbouring incumbents. On the other hand, there are times and places which call pre-eminently for the assertion of principles at all costs, and where in any district there has grown up an intolerant tradition, it might well appear to a thoughtful and charitable Christian man that it is his clear duty to incur unpopularity and to provoke controversy by publicly and emphatically protesting against the reigning prejudice. In the present unhappy condition of the National Church, when the most part of the more prominently placed ecclesiastics are avowedly attached to a conception of the Church and of the Ministry which is equally unhistorical and uncharitable, it must be allowed that there is large probability that any attempt to fraternize with Nonconformists will provoke resentment and controversy. Yet this very circumstance would appear to indicate not obscurely the great importance of making, before it is too late, an effec-

tive protest against the dominance of narrow views within the Church. In any case, the decision of the question, whether or not a course of legitimate conduct is or is not expedient, is no fit subject for episcopal directions, but ought to be left to the individual, who is ultimately responsible. It is easily imaginable that the personal equation is an element of primary importance in measuring the public worth of an individual protest; but this is an element which manifestly lies outside the control of official authority. Good neighbourliness, a sense of fitness, right feeling, tact, wisdom, considerateness—these are qualities which are all desirable in the man who will give a lead, especially an unpopular lead, to others; but their presence or absence in any given individual does not depend either on his wishes, or on the importance of the steps he takes, or on the ill consequences of their absence. When all is said, there is a barrier beyond which Authority cannot rightly, or reasonably, or legally push its action, and that barrier is on the hither side of the expedient and the individual.

IV. The Larger Interests Concerned.

No reflective observer of the national life will underrate the gravity of such incidents as that which has occasioned this paper. An ounce of fact is worth a ton of theory in such a matter as Christian Reunion. The kindly words of many good men are reduced to

unmeaningness by a single episcopal blunder. In this case the blunder is particularly regrettable, for few bishops have spoken more often and more sympathetically than the Archbishop of York on the subject of Anglican relations with Nonconformists. It is hard for any student of the Archbishop's speeches not to believe that his Grace is really coerced by the conviction that the Law prohibits the public religious intercourse of clergymen and Nonconformists, and if that be so, it is impossible for any Nonconformist to give any serious heed to appeals for better relations which come from men who show no sign of resenting that law, or seeking to cancel it. The law does not exist; it is the wraith of departed intolerance evoked to disturb the peace of the churches by the incantations of living bigots. But, as we have said, the impression that there is such a law does exist even in quarters where it might have been thought legal knowledge would have been found; and the false impression is hardly less effectual for mischief than the law.

By a significant coincidence the Archbishop's letters to Dr. Eyre disallowing free public intercourse with Nonconformists appeared along with another episcopal communication of a different kind, also from the pen of a Northern Bishop.

The Bishop of Ripon has seized the opportunity provided by the meeting of the "National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches" at Leeds to address to the out-going President, Mr. Scott Lidgett, a long letter on the subject of "Christian Unity." This letter is, as might be expected, eloquently expressed, and

might well serve as the formal introduction of ecclesiastical negotiations; but what does it become more than a mocking satire when it has to be read along with the episode at Scarborough? Mr. Campbell, of the City Temple, went out of his way to bring into the discussions of the Council an earnest appeal for a common Conference of all Christian Churches; but the proposal is reduced to absolute fatuity if the legal and accepted position of Anglicans and Nonconformists is what the Archbishop of York declares. We have just emerged from a long educational conflict in the course of which the claim of the Church of England to retain in half the schools of the country a monopoly of religious teaching has been passionately urged by almost all the bishops and leading clergy; they have argued that the religious teaching of the National Church is really nothing more than the teaching of that "fundamental Christianity," which all Christians must be supposed to believe; they have maintained that the denominational test, which is imposed on all Headmasters in Anglican schools, is really only the indispensable security that this "fundamental Christianity" shall be taught by those who themselves believe it; and they have poured scorn on the "undenominational teaching" which an earlier and better generation of Churchmen advocated and organized in the public elementary schools. The episode at Scarborough is a luminous commentary on all this pleading, and casts an instructive side-light on the state of feeling among Anglican clergymen; it illustrates the temper which must be supposed to mark their administration of public duty as well in

the elementary schools as out of them. Take the lowest view of the incident, and treat it as a mere question of ecclesiastical order (which apparently is what the Archbishop would wish), and realize how the Nonconformist must regard a doctrine of the incumbent's authority which gives him in his own eyes, and in the eyes of his superiors, a right to prohibit any clergyman from entering within the walls of a Nonconformist chapel to take part in a meeting there. Imagine how the claim looks in the eyes of ordinary folk. Before the Nonconformist can invite an English clergyman to address his people, he must go to the Parish Priest, who may be, and often is, a man of the narrowest opinions and the most meagre abilities, who not rarely is actively opposed on a hundred local issues to his neighbours, and commonly holds the Nonconformist in the parish to be "schismaticks," whose fatal error is prayed against every week in the Litany; in any case, he must go to him, and ask his permission before he can invite the clergyman, whom he and his friends desire to hear. Is this a tolerable position? Why must this permission be sought, he cannot but ask, in the case of my chapel, which is not asked in the case of any other public building in the parish? What right has the incumbent to call the tune within the walls of my chapel, or to interfere with my arrangements? All this on the lowest view of the episode; but the lowest view will not and, pace Archiepiscopi, cannot be taken. In the existing situation it is absolutely certain that the local aspects will be merged in the general, and the whole matter will be regarded, not in the light of a petty affair of

ecclesiastical form or parochial etiquette, but as raising the great issue of spiritual status. Is the Nonconformist minister an intruder, to be regarded with resentment and made the object of official disapproval? Is he a schismatic, or not?

That a Nonconformist minister cannot be invited to preach in a parish church is plainly part and parcel of our very rigid system of limiting the incumbent's freedom of action. There is no question of ecclesiastical theory necessarily raised by that prohibition, though it is much to be desired on many grounds that it were removed. The insistence on episcopal Ordination as the rule of the English Church does not really connect itself with any exclusive doctrine of the ministry, and was as a matter of fact adopted by men who were in full communion with the non-episcopal Churches of Europe. But this invidious separation of Nonconformist chapels from all other buildings, and placing a stigma of public disapprobation on them as if they (like the books on the Index which may only be read by the faithful with license of authority) might only be entered under extraordinary precautions against ill-consequences, cannot but carry a suggestion of injury and insult. If, as the Archbishop appears to think, the law compels it, then surely his Grace will hasten to seek an alteration of the law; if, as we maintain, the law does not require it, but only a mistaken impression of the law surviving from a past phase of national life, then the sooner this is universally understood the better.

NOTE.

Since the above was written the *Guardian* (March 13th, 1907) has reported another incident, which appears to show that the Archbishop of York carries his notion of the Incumbent's rights to the point of maintaining that no other clergyman may even lecture in a town hall without his permission. The incident is stated thus:—

> "The Archbishop of York having objected to a Secretary of the Church Association delivering a lecture on 'Is the Church in Danger?' in Loftus Town Hall, on the ground that it was an intrusion into the parish without the consent of the Vicar, the Church Association has sent a reply, dated March 7th, in which the Secretary says:—
>
> "I laid your letter before my Council to-day, and am directed to say that the claim of a Vicar to exclude any person in Holy Orders from lecturing in a town hall, without his express permission, is one which they cannot accept. It is no 'intrusion' upon any right of the Vicar to give any number of lectures in his neighbourhood without seeking his approval. Mr. Bowring is not proposing to 'officiate,' and his lecture is in no way unsuited to the season of Lent. It has been arranged for some time, and will in no way conflict with that service to which all who are minded will, of course, go, just as though no lantern lecture were being given. Your Grace reminds the Council that you have power to inhibit any clergyman from officiating in your diocese. It is quite true that a bishop can inhibit anybody from officiating in a parish without assigning, or even without having, any reason for such purely arbitrary action. But such an abuse of prerogative in Mr. Bowring's case would not prevent his continuing to lecture, though it might induce the Council to multiply such agencies."

It is maintained by the present writer that no legal obligation rests on any clergyman to obey episcopal monitions which are other than "godly," and that a vital element in such "godliness" is legality, and that legality implies accordance with the law, and enforce-

ableness by the law. It is also maintained that no right at all exists in the bishop to prohibit or to license save in connection with the official ministrations of the clergy, that such official ministrations are strictly defined by the law, and that they do not extend to such action as was taken either by Dr. Eyre or by Mr. Bowring. Neither town halls nor Nonconformist chapels are within the control of the incumbent, and they assuredly must be supposed to lie outside the reach of episcopal regulation. A clergyman, not bound to the diocesan by any vow of canonical obedience, and freely exercising like any other citizen, his legal franchises, is absolutely outside the interference of any bishop or incumbent. If he desire to officiate in the churches or other buildings belonging to the Established Church, he must conform to the conditions which the law prescribes for such officiating; if he behave himself scandalously, there are appropriate remedies. To lecture in a town hall, or to address a meeting of men in a Nonconformist chapel, is neither to "officiate" nor to be scandalous.

The Obligation of the Laity with Respect to the Canons of 1604.

The following note is taken from the Preface to Cardwell's "Synodalia," and appears serviceable for the purpose of illustrating a rather ambiguous question:—

> "It is clear that in the earliest periods after the Reformation they (Canons) were put forth as binding upon Laymen. Queen Elizabeth declared even her injunctions,

drawn up merely by a commission without the assent of Convocation, to be binding upon all her subjects, 'every man in their offices, degrees, and states,' and when she ratified the Canons of 1597, she ordered them to be diligently observed and obeyed by all her subjects in virtue of her Royal supremacy The same language was held by King James I. and King Charles I. when they published the Canons of 1604 and 1640 respectively. And these views were enforced by means of high commission, as long as that Court continued to exist; but the Courts of Common Law, acting upon the dictum laid down by Sir E. Coke (12 Co. 72) have decided in several instances that laymen could not be included within the operation of modern Canons; and since the unanimous decision of the Court of King's Bench, as delivered by Lord Hardwicke in the year 1737 (Stra., 1056), it is universally admitted that 'the Canons of 1604, not having been confirmed by Parliament, do not *proprio vigore* bind the Laity.' It is clear, however, that this decision affects the question only as a point of jurisprudence confining itself entirely to the force which the Canons derive from the King's prerogative and the law and constitution of the land. There is still to be considered the foundation they possess in the institution of Christianity, and the obligation they lay upon the conscience, as the enactments of a Church which received its appointment and authority from Christ. And this is an obligation entirely distinct from the former, liable, indeed, to be controlled by it whenever the two would otherwise come into conflict, but acting by means of different motives, and appealing to a different jurisdiction. It is, indeed, part of its nature that it is incapable of being strictly defined; but it is not on that account the less binding on all those, who profess themselves members of the Church of England, and look upon it as inheriting the privileges of the Church of Christ.

The Synod which was held at Jerusalem in the time of the Apostles claimed and exercised authority over the Members of the Christian Church without distinction. And in this instance we have the maximum of obligation which any council of the Church can be supposed capable of imposing. To this instance, then, how nearly can any other synod at any other period approximate? Let it be granted, whether on the ground of unbroken descent, or on the more general plea of Church unity, that a Convocation of the Church of England, constituted as it has always been, is entitled to claim succession from the Council of Jerusalem,

and some estimate may be formed as to the extent to which modern decrees are binding upon present Churchmen. Deduct from the case of the Apostles their individual and joint infallibility, and together with it that independence and freedom, which a Church united with the State has necessarily surrendered, and the difference is the condition of a modern English Synod, capable of being misled, as consisting of men who can give no proof that they are divinely inspired, limited even by its original constitution, because it cannot decree in opposition to the words of Christ and His Apostles, and still further limited by its alliance with the State, because no man can serve two masters. After these important abatements, however, there is still some degree of obligation remaining; and whatever that may be, and however impossible it may be to convey it in any prescribed rule of conduct, it represents the real extent to which the Canons of 1604 are still binding upon the lay members of the Church. That this extent is to be determined by each individual for himself, contracting a responsibility which from the nature of the question the Church cannot exercise for him, is a fact which only adds to the amount of his duties, and to the care and seriousness he must use in endeavouring to discharge them.

When this general estimate has been formed, the cogency of any particular case is still subject to the following limitations. Canons may be considered as no longer binding: 1. Where it is no longer possible to observe them; as in the 86th Canon, where mention is made of a Court of High Commission, and the 55th, where the Church of Scotland is included within the bidding prayer. 2. Where it would be contrary to law to require the observance of them; as in Canon 80, respecting the Book of Common Prayer, and the many Canons affected by the Test and Toleration Acts. 3. Where their expressed or clearly-implied object would be defeated, or left unfulfilled by observing them; as in Canon 74, which gives instructions respecting dress calculated in the present day to occasion ridicule. 4. Where they require a lower degree of observance than is actually practised; as in Canon 42, where the study of the New Testament is directed to the Latin translation and not to the Greek original. 5. Where they are superseded in *eadem materia* by the improved nature of the present practice, as in the use of the Latin grammar of King Henry VIII. (Can. 79), which a Convocation itself had undertaken to reform, and in the distinct

duties assigned to preachers and other ministers, that distinction having ceased in the advanced condition of the Clergy. To these conditions, which properly apply to all cases of ancient and minute injunctions, must be added in the case of the Canons the further qualification that the authority from which they proceeded is virtually extinct, and that the high Spiritual persons whose jurisdiction is next in order to that of a Synod, though they are not competent to annul a canon formally, are competent to instruct and direct the conscience as to the continued observance of it."

V

OF THE PRESENT DISCONTENTS OF ENGLISH CHURCHMEN

> "I am not one of those who think that the people are never in the wrong. They have been so, frequently and outrageously, both in other countries and in this. But I do say, that in all disputes between them and their rulers, the presumption is at least upon a par in favour of the people. Experience may perhaps justify me in going further. When popular discontents have been very prevalent, it may well be affirmed and supported, that there has been generally something found amiss in the constitution, or in the conduct of government. The people have no interest in disorder. When they do wrong, it is their error, and not their crime. But with the governing part of the state, it is far otherwise. They certainly may act ill by design, as well as by mistake."
>
> EDMUND BURKE.

THERE can be little doubt in any mind as to the existence of grave discontent among large numbers of English Churchmen at the present time. The fact

is variously certified, as its exposition is in the hands of the cultured and religious, or in those of the ignorant and blatant. Even these last demonstrations are not without importance, for the ignorant and blatant more commonly than not are echoing graver protests than they can understand, and have more justifications than they know. In any case it is no common or trivial thing that the Primate of All England should be rudely interrupted in a public meeting of Churchmen when he is concerned with what surely ought to be the least controversial of all subjects—the provision and training of candidates for the Ministry. It is no slight or insignificant circumstance that the Bishop of London should be pursued with cries of insult when he is engaged on the work which might be supposed to command universal approbation among Christian men—preaching the Gospel to the multitudes in the parks. It is certainly an unusual and cannot be an unimportant event that a Judge should express himself with severity from the Bench as to the violence which English people inflicted on devout ladies engaged in work which might be thought to evoke the admiration and respect of all generous men—the ministry of the sick and destitute. Profoundly regrettable as are all these outbursts of feeling, and deeply discreditable to those immediately responsible for them, yet are they not to be dismissed with nothing beyond the censure they assuredly merit. Rather ought they to be taken into the grave consideration of all men in authority as indications of a very serious and widely-distributed discontent with the present "constitution

and conduct of government" in the Church of England.

Why is it that the obvious reasonableness of encouraging a serious and apparently successful attempt to recruit and educate Ordination Candidates did not secure for the Archbishop of Canterbury universal applause when he gave the emphatic and deliberate sanction of a public advocacy to the Mirfield Community of the Resurrection? Why is it that the manifest goodness of the Bishop of London in adding to the heavy burdens of his official business the voluntary labours of missionary preaching in the open air did not enlist the enthusiastic approval of all good people? Why did the sublime self-abnegation and devotion of the "Sisters of St. Mary at the Cross" fail to restrain the brutality of their beneficiaries in the Shoreditch slums? What is the malignant parasite which clings to Primate, Bishop, and Sisterhood alike, so that between their good works and the approval they deserve, there is always a disconcerting suspicion that another interest than the immediate and ostensible one is being served by them all, and that *that* interest is not good? Suspicion, like oppression, driveth a wise man mad. How much more does its presence work madness in the minds of the prejudiced, the illiterate, the unwise! No one seriously questions the personal worth of the individuals, however placed and described, whose actions are thus received with coldness, or disapprobation, or insult. Yet will any one deny either that the parasite of suspicion attaches to their actions, or that it is the parasite of a well-grounded suspicion?

Let us take the case of the Shoreditch Sisterhood, and consider how it bears on the general subject of Anglican Discontent.

The particular issue in the suit, Toogood and another *v.* Clarke and others, was of a type which never fails to arouse the keenest concern in a commercial community, for it touched property, and the testamentary liberty which is so dear to individualistic Englishmen. Had undue influence been exerted on the legatrix in order to persuade her to leave her possessions to the Community of which she was a member? The verdict was equally decisive and satisfactory. There could be no doubt in anyone's mind that the contested will expressed the free and deliberate purpose of the late Miss Florence Toogood, and the attempt to show undue pressure collapsed completely and even ignominiously. The Anglican Convent of the Sisters of St. Mary at the Cross came out of the law-suit with flying colours, and when it became known that the good ladies had been subjected to ill-treatment in their own district as a consequence of the newspaper reports of the trial, the Jury made a sympathetic contribution to their funds, and the Judge expressed himself with vigour from the Bench. The personal aspect of the case leaves nothing to be desired; but there is another aspect which raises the most formidable questions, and these await answer from the responsible quarters. A remarkable revelation has incidentally been made of community life in the Church of England, and a suggestive side-light cast on episcopal administration.

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Let it be observed that there are few subjects with respect to which the Episcopate has had more direct and continuous responsibility than the growth of Sisterhoods in the Church of England; for in the nature of things these institutions cannot be parochial, and must, if they are to have any ecclesiastical recognition at all, receive episcopal direction. So far as the episcopal mind is disclosed in published biographies of eminent bishops, it may perhaps be said that their Lordships have frankly recognized, and acted on, this special responsibility. Two examples will be sufficient—Bishop Samuel Wilberforce and Archbishop Benson.

In the year 1854 the House of Mercy at Clewer was disturbed by certain questions "as to the practice by the Sisters of habitual confession." The Bishop of Oxford took the opportunity of expressing himself on the subject at issue, and on the larger question of conventual organization. We may quote a few sentences from a letter printed in vol. III of the "Life," and dated May, 1854:—

> "As to the disputed question of Confession, we must make provision that those whose consciences are burdened with any weighty matter may be able, before communicating, to open their grief to some discreet minister of God's Word and Sacraments, that by his ministry they may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice. But we must not provide that what the Church of England so manifestly treats as an occasional remedy for exceptional cases should become the established rule of their ordinary spiritual life" (p. 326).

In a letter written about the same time to the

Rev. T. T. Carter the bishop used very strong language:—

> "You *must not* let the soft influence of the women's souls with which you have to deal lead you into becoming a *director*. You must with me distinctly act, and say that Clewer is to be Church of England and *no more*. We must have no *evasions* as to Roman Catholic books, as to going at stated times to Richards and Pusey, &c. Evasion seems to me the very clinging curse of everything Roman and Romanistic" (p. 328).

Later in the same year the bishop writes to a clergyman categorically refusing to sanction "vows" in the case of a young lady:—

> "When you ask me to give her the apostolical benediction on her 'public resolution of chastity and devotion to Christ,' you ask me to do what, with my sense of the certain danger and probable unlawfulness of vows which Christ has not appointed, it is quite impossible for me to do. Such a *resolution* made *publicly* and in appearance and intention confirmed by a Bishop's act is, whatever distinction may be discovered by an ingenious mind, really, and *bonâ fide*, *a vow*" (p. 331).

Eight years later, in 1862, at the Church Congress in Oxford the bishop spoke very decidedly in the same sense, and this public declaration appears to have been accepted with general approval:—

> "I am bound to say this, in order that there may be no mistake of one holding the office God has given me, that I should not have felt at liberty to take any part in the engagements of any Sisterhood of which such vows formed a part—because, firstly, I see no warrant for them in the Word of God—and it would seem to me that to encourage persons to make vows for which there is no distinct promise given that they should be able to keep them would be entangling them in a yoke of danger; secondly, because it seems to me that our Church has certainly discouraged

such vows; and thirdly, because it seems to me really to be of the essence of such a religious life that it should be continued, not because in a moment of past fervour a vow was made, but because by a continual life of love that life is *again and again* freely offered to that service to which it was originally dedicated. I feel, therefore, that I may venture to say that instead of the perpetual vows representing the higher, it is the admission of a lower standard. . . . I believe that the abuses of that life have come, first from the promises of *perpetuity*, and secondly from the abuse connected with the admission of persons having *property* and being led to give that property up in a moment of excitement to this purpose. If we are able through God's grace to keep this movement from these and like faults, we, and our children after us, may humbly thank God for the revival of this order amongst us" (p. 333).

Bishop Wilberforce would seem to have acted up to his vigorous declarations, for his biographer prints a letter of the year 1850, in which he curtly refused his sanction to a projected Sisterhood, the rules of which violated his principles. It is with a sensation of astonishment that we read so vigorous a pronouncement. In the last half century English bishops have learned a different method of address, when "catholic" proposals are concerned:—

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have not till to-day had time to read with care the proposed rules of your proposed Sisterhood. I have to-day read the first page and no more. For I am bound to say that I so utterly disapprove of all that meets me on that first page that I thought it best to read no further. When I first met with such names as 'professed,' &c., I trusted that these were only the names to object to, and that this objection might easily be removed. But as I read on I found to my great grief that these were realities as well as names of evil sound to which I must utterly object. I object, then, absolutely, as un-Christian and savouring of the worst evils of Rome, to the vows involved in such a context in the statement as 'She is for ever consecrated to the service of her heavenly Spouse.'

> I object to the expression itself as unwarranted by God's word and savouring of one of the most carnal perversions of the Church of Rome. The Scriptures speak of Christ as being the Husband of 'the Church His Spouse,' not of several women, in their individual Christian being, having any right to regard themselves as spouses of the Lord. I am bound, therefore, in Christian openness to say (1) that I utterly disapprove of these rules, and protest, in the name of Christ, as the chief pastor of His flock in this diocese, against you or any of my clergy sanctioning their adoption by any member of our apostolical communion. (2) That I add my solemn warning that such tampering with the language, acts, and temper of the Church of Rome in young women of our communion must tend to betray them into infidelity to their mother Church, and to perversion to the Papal (in this land) schismatical and corrupt communion.—I am, my dear Sir, most sincerely yours, S. OXON." (p. 330).

We may, of course, and probably we should, discount the vehement anti-papalism of the bishop's language by the acute excitement of the time, but when every proper deduction is made, we cannot be wrong in regarding these private and public declarations as revealing a deep sense of the gravity of the subject with which they deal, a full consciousness of episcopal responsibility with respect to it, and very strong convictions on the issues of principle and practice which were at stake in it.

Archbishop Benson lived in a comparatively calm time; and we are under no necessity of making any deductions from his language. Not less than Bishop Samuel Wilberforce he was intellectually and morally averse from the Puritanical sentiment of ordinary Englishmen. On æsthetic and ecclesiastical grounds he was even more likely to sympathize with everything that might restore the interest and power of Monasticism to the Church of England. Writing at

a more advanced stage of the history, the Archbishop found himself confronted by developments which the Bishop had not contemplated. The arrogance, and dangerous independence of the new communities distressed his governing spirit, and his pastoral conscience was outraged by the levity with which they were ready to sacrifice the spiritual interest of the parishes to their own self-importance. Moreover, his good sense was offended by the perverse eccentricities of some of the "Founders." Here is a characteristic outburst on "the sham of modern attempts at Monasticism":—

> "They begin with the enmity to the secular clergy, despising instantly their homes and habits—they have Ambition in place of other vices, everyone thinks he has the gifts, not of a Monk, but of an Abbot or Founder. Their dress makes the artisan mad—their expression of face has the same effect on any Stoic. Their idea of authority is to appoint an officer of their own to order them to do all they wish to do, who is then their oracle." (*Life*, vol. II., p. 272.)

In May, 1890, the Archbishop was much concerned with Sisterhoods:—

> "I have had a letter from A—— expressing gratitude on behalf of Sisterhoods for the kindliness of the Bishops towards them, but saying that they do not consider themselves as Diocesan, but as 'Church-wide.' The Bishop of the Diocese has no relation to them, only that Bishop whom they elect Visitor, and he only as Visitor. The Bishop of the Diocese may license their Clergy, but I think the old man implies that if he does not, it does not matter.
>
> "The old monastic bodies would have lasted till now if they had not been exempt from Diocesan jurisdiction so that they had no friends when the covetousness arose. But as regards themselves, they were at least under discipline to the Pope; these are under no one but their

chaplains, so that a presbyterian system has started up in the heart of episcopacy, and if the Bishops pressed them hard there would not be much hesitation in adhering to the Church of Rome. I believe this secret practice to savour much of Rome" (p. 307).

A year later we find another letter on the same subject:—

"Father A—— came to talk over X—— Sisterhood. The Statutes are quite explicit that a sister may leave, when she feels that she ought to leave, quite freely. I, as visitor, have no cognisance of anything but this. He, with any amount of assumption, says that when the Statutes are revised again this must be struck out. They have, he says, their admission form, and their conviction. Both make it a sin to leave their profession, and he—so please you—he could not continue to hold his office of chaplain unless the Statutes are brought into conformity with the secret, dishonest profession which they have surreptitiously, though long before my time, introduced.

"I decline to 'dispense' sisters who do leave. They may leave by the Statutes. The mother has power to 'remove' them by the Statutes—quite apart from her power to expel, *i.e.*, for health or any good cause. And I am not going to sanction their innovation by dispensing from vows which I neither impose nor approve—as *they* take them.

"I see no impropriety in vows taken after a certain age and above-board. That is another matter."

Again a year later, and we have the final account of the Archbishop's negotiations with this rebellious Sisterhood. The letter merits quotation, as a luminous account of a very grave aspect of community action in the Church of England. It also brings out the extremely important, but commonly ignored, fact that the Sisterhoods are powerful teaching bodies among the people, and must not be discussed as if they were merely devotional and disciplinary institutions. What is held in the convent is taught in the district, and

whatever a bishop sanctions as "visitor" he really authorizes as diocesan. On April 6th, 1892, Archbishop Benson wrote as follows:—

> "A long hour's conversation, and as he said, an anxious one, with A——. His beautiful expression and still bright eye and tender manner make him lovable beyond most men, yet how I differ from him! He seems to me possessed with the radically Roman ideas and to lack any devotion to Scripture or to the early Church. His Sisterhood has been working for years at C——. B—— goes to conduct the work there. B—— will not allow that confession is "essential" to Christian life, but treats it as a remedy the working of which is truly described in the Prayer Book. He has made some little changes in the Celebrations of Holy Communion. Hereupon the Sisters, who had gradually got into their hands all threads of teaching, visiting, and parochial organization, are withdrawn by the Community. The kindly old man will listen to no representations of the poverty and misery of the district, and of the losses that must ensue while anything of a system is being built up again—even if any workers can be obtained, which is at present next to impossible. No! the Sisters must have daily Celebration with forms they are accustomed to, and all their teaching must lead up to Confession. What he has said in his letters he says more strongly still in conversation. He considers as 'test questions,' 'How many Celebrations have you?' 'Do you teach Confession?' On these two Commandments, it seems, hang all the law and the prophets. 'We Bishops have never understood on what conditions we admit Sisterhoods to our parishes—to be withdrawn on any change of incumbency which does not run on our lines!' Pereat Parochia" (p. 426).

If from these episcopal letters we turn to the disclosures made in the course of the recent Probate action, we shall find that every element of mischief and danger which Bishop Wilberforce and Archbishop Benson described and denounced was present in the Anglican Convent of St. Mary at the Cross, Shoreditch, and had been present for some thirty years. We shall

also find that, in spite of these elements of mischief and danger, the convent enjoyed full episcopal sanction and protection. In order to avoid every appearance of unfairness we will limit ourselves to the evidence tendered by the Rev. Henry Daniel Nihill, who drafted the rules of the convent which were adopted in 1874, and held for many years the position of "spiritual director of the sisterhood." We learn from this friendly witness that vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty are made at profession by the sisters, that the ceremony of profession is of the most solemn and dramatic character, that auricular confession is compulsory, and frequent, that penances of the most childish and humiliating sort are imposed, that Bishop Creighton had been "formally appointed visitor," and that successive Bishops of London visited the convent, and regularly held confirmations within its walls. It will be well to quote some passages from the report of Mr. Nihill's evidence as given in the columns of the *Times*:—

> "The object of the community was the foundation of a sick hospital for children. The sisters had a small-pox hospital at Edgware and convalescent homes at Ridge, near Barnet, and one near Watford, where admission was free. The Bishop of London visited the convent at Shoreditch, and held confirmations there. . . . He had never had any conversation with the testatrix about her property or her will, but when she was professed the will was placed upon the altar by her own hand during the offertory. . . . He was aware that the sisters used to have penances, just for so long as a child is sent into a corner. The termination of the penance depended upon the sister terminating her temper. The penance never lasted even for one day, much less for three days; it depended solely upon the acknowledgment by the sister that she was doing wrong whether she repented or not. A sister might be

told to sit in a chair until she had acknowledged that she had been wrong, and expressed her sorrow. . . .

"He used to receive the oral confessions of the sisters; there was no book of written confessions. The sisters used to write notes of the things they intended to confess in what they called their 'confession-books.' They were written on sheets of paper. These were not notes for confession, but 'self-examination papers.' He and Mother Monica had stopped this practice. It was untrue that Mother Monica had ever discussed the confessions of the sisters with him. He had published a number of letters concerning the work of the Sisterhood for private circulation, and they had subsequently been published in book form, under the title of 'The Sisters of the Poor and Their Work.' Those letters were still circulated by the sisters, and had been submitted to the sisters before publication. . . . He had taken the rule of obedience as to 'Regarding the voice of your superior as the voice of God' from St. Ignatius—it was the rule of the Jesuits. Bishop Creighton and the present Bishop of London used to make formal visitations of the convent. Bishop Creighton was the formally appointed visitor. . . .

"The ceremony of profession of a sister was one of great solemnity, the sister signing a profession of faith, and vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. These were placed upon the altar, or into the hand of the priest, who placed them there. The sister had to lie on the ground under a pall. The object of placing the will upon the altar was for the sister to offer her future money to God by dedicating her will to Him. In the eyes of the sisterhood such a will was irrevocable. . . .

"The Bishop of London, Bishop Temple, used to hold a confirmation at the convent chapel once a year. He came three times. . . . Many ladies became associates who did not become postulants. It was not a step towards becoming a sister. Men became associates. Many postulants left without becoming novices, and many novices without becoming sisters, and many sisters 'left.' There was nothing at all to prevent postulants leaving and nothing to prevent sisters except their vows. He had never tried to stop anyone going. When he spoke of sisters 'running away' he meant that they had left secretly; that applied to all those he had mentioned."[1]

[1] *v. Times* Law Report, Thursday, June 13th, 1907.

Let it be gladly admitted that the objects of this convent are the best in the world; let homage be paid unstintingly to the self-sacrifice and devotion of the Sisters who dedicated themselves and their possessions to the work; let no suggestion of aught disloyal and unworthy in the conduct of the convent enter into the argument. We assume that the rules were, as the spiritual director affirms, obeyed "in the spirit and in the letter." It remains the case that for a whole generation the Anglican convent in Shoreditch has illustrated and propagated a definitely mediæval conception of Christianity, restoring within its walls, and within the range of its influence, the specific doctrines and disciplines which the Church of England deliberately and categorically repudiated at the Reformation. It remains the case that this literal "undoing of the Reformation" has proceeded under direct episcopal sanction from the first. If, as we are reminded *ad nauseam*, abuse does not properly disallow use, it is certainly as true that the virtues which cluster round false systems of faith and life do not make those systems any the less false. If Christian history has any clear teachings at all for the guidance of the present Church, the grave mischiefs which follow in due course upon the specific teachings and disciplines, which this Anglican convent has revived, must be held to constitute the plainest of such lessons. The question is not whether the Sisterhood is excellent in purpose and heroic in labour, but whether a discarded version of Christianity is being surreptitiously introduced under the system and with the credit of the National Church.

Bishop Creighton had certainly considered, and formed a very definite notion of, his duties as "visitor." In the fascinating Biography by his widow we are told that he had been brought into "close contact with Sisters and their work," and that "his relations with them were most friendly." He expressed himself in clear terms on the office of visitor:—

> "I feel strongly that the office of visitor ought to be in accordance with ancient precedent. I see some of the suggestions indicate a jealousy of the visitor. This is the bad point about sisterhoods. They want to be absolutely independent, obedient only to their own will. Such a claim is entirely unworthy. We must all work in obedience and cannot afford to do without it. But observe, the obedience is only to your constitution. The office of visitor is merely that of guardian and interpreter of the statutes. He has no power of interference. He has merely to pronounce if you are keeping your own laws. The proposal to depose him if you do not like him is subversive of all rule. He is your judge chosen by yourselves: he must be for life, and must be independent of your will. He must have a veto on change of the constitution in important matters: for *by undertaking the post he gives a guarantee to the general public of your object and your methods.* You must not use him and then throw him away when you are started. A Bishop is already visitor of many institutions, he is not likely to interfere unless there is strong cause. The fear is of too little rather than too much."

It is plainly implied that only on the basis of a cordial approval of the constitution of a community could any self-respecting Bishop accept a post which "gave a guarantee to the general public of the community's object and methods." On July 17th, 1900, Bishop Creighton wrote thus:—

> "I may say of myself that I have had an increasing amount of work to do in reference to communities. It is

not too much to say that I stand in intimate connexion with them all in the diocese. The superiors frequently consult me about all sorts of matters. This arises from the way in which I am known to exercise my visitorial office. I think that I have now established a series of precedents which have put this point on a regular basis" (vol. II. p. 271).

It would seem an unavoidable inference that Bishop Creighton approved the system described by the "spiritual director" of the Anglican convent in Shoreditch: and if this be the case, then he was not only plainly opposed to the views expressed by Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, and Archbishop Benson, but was at cross purposes with the English Reformation itself. Yet no prelate had clearer insight into the conditions under which alone the Church of England could retain the character and status of a National Church. What could be plainer than this, written in 1898:—

"The English Church must be the religious organ of the English people. The people need not all agree about details, but the general trend of the Church must be regulated by their wishes. The Church cannot go too far from the main ideas of the people. The present question is, Has it done so? or rather, have some of the clergy done so? They clearly have..... The nation exists by virtue of a particular type of character. Character is largely founded on religion. There is in some quarters an attempt to bring back religious observances of an exotic kind which do menace English character.....

"The function of the Church of England is to be the Church of free men. Its misfortune is that it does not succeed in rising above historical accidents so as to realize its own great heritage. Its enemy is the Church of Rome: but it ought not to treat its foe with fear, but with kindly regard. The Church of Rome is the Church of decadent peoples: it lives only on its past, and has no future. Borrowing from it may be silly, but it is not dangerous, and will pass.

> The Church of England has before it the conquest of the world. We can only succeed if we gird up our loins with the assurance that the future is ours" (*ibid.*, p. 301).

There is a curious *non sequitur* in this passage. Surely if Roman methods have reduced the Church of Rome to the humiliating position of the Church of decadent peoples, there is great and apparent peril in copying those methods. Let it also be observed that what is said of the Church of England can only be justified if by the Church of England is meant the organized Christianity of the entire English Nation, not merely that part of it which is technically Anglican. Can anything be conceived more incompatible with the notions of a Church of free men than the disciplines disclosed as prevailing in the Shoreditch convent? Is the Rule of the Jesuits a possible rule for any genuinely English institution?

Bishop Creighton's correspondence scintillates with flashes of profound sagacity. Again and again, he seems to strike out just the formula of Anglican statesmanship which we want, and we feel disposed to inscribe it on our banners and make it the basis of serious and continuous effort; but then there is ever the disconcerting commentary of the actual course of his episcopate as disclosed in such an example as this visitorship of the Shoreditch convent. When, for instance, we read, "We must fall into line on a liberal interpretation of the Anglican system; this must be by reference to its *principles*, not its *letter*," we agree eagerly, and ask only that the *principles of Anglicanism* shall be made clear to us, for in truth if the Shoreditch convent represents those principles (and we might be

pardoned for supposing that its visitor thought so) we are totally unable to frame any coherent conception of what Anglicanism really is. Again, when the bishop writes, "It is absolutely necessary at present to fall in on Anglican lines widely interpreted; but the lines must be clear before the interpretation can be satisfactory" (p. 360), he carries us with him, only we ask what the lines of Anglicanism can be if they really include the Jesuit notion of obedience. Nor is it altogether easy to yield to the visitor of the Shoreditch convent the "confidence" which he asks for in this connection, since he sanctions regular, frequent, and compulsory confession in that community, and yet can write to a correspondent that he considers that the general adoption of confession would show a weakening of the moral fibre of the English character (p. 365). We cordially agree with this opinion, and draw the inference that habitual confession lies outside the "lines" of Anglicanism; but how can this inference be reconciled with Shoreditch? Bishop Creighton had to face the question in 1899 in a concrete example, which is the more clearly imprinted on the mind of the present writer as he happened to know something of the circumstances.

> "The Bishop refused to be drawn into a discussion of the whole policy of the Church, and whilst stating clearly that anything like the introduction of the system of confession into the Church of England must be very carefully guarded against, he asserted that in his opinion there was no need whatever for any really serious anxiety upon that point" (p. 364).

It is, however, hard to see how the system of confession which the bishop deprecated could be more

effectually introduced into the parishes than by setting to work in them with full official sanction communities which are themselves organized on the basis of regular and frequent confession. Yet this is precisely what the bishop appears to have done.

"If 'sacerdotal pretensions' mean tendencies on the part of the clergy to revert to modes of teaching which have been wisely abandoned, then, I think, they must be checked by all means." This, again, is a wise declaration of Bishop Creighton, which carries conviction, but what does it mean when interpreted by the practice of the visitor of an Anglican convent?

The present writer shares to the full the desire which many good Churchmen now feel and express for a larger liberty of evangelistic and pastoral methods than traditionally is permitted to the Established clergy. He understands, and could endorse, Coleridge's exclamation:—"For a long time past the Church of England seems to me to have been blighted with prudence, as it is called. I wish with all my heart we had a little zealous imprudence." But the compiler of the philosopher's "Table-Talk" assigns that utterance to the year 1830, three years before the recognised beginning of the Oxford Movement. The Rome-hating mind of Coleridge could hardly have imagined that this salutary "imprudence" would take the form of a careful and constant resuscitation of the very methods and doctrines which are most characteristically Roman. It is an abuse of language to justify such dangerous anachronisms by the practical plea for liberty of experiment. Mediæval Monasticism, with its vows, habitual confession, the

sacerdotal conception of the ministry—these are, from the point of view of a Reformed Church, experiments which have been tried on the grand scale, and have disastrously failed. "Be on your guard against the illusions of names and phrases, and against the influence of authority in this matter," said Bishop Thirlwall in 1842, when the religious public was in a fever of alarm over the Tractarians; and surely his warning is not unnecessary now. But the balance of self-delusion seems to have passed from the advocates of the Reformation to its hostile critics. Perhaps deference to the reigning prejudice is ever the besetting sin of those who think with the majority; and, however different the case may be with the nation itself, yet within the limits of that small public which finds its representatives in the chosen laymen who figure at ecclesiastical gatherings and frequent episcopal palaces, the predominant sentiment just now is anti-Protestant. The offensive proceedings of the pseudo-Protestant agitators, of course, make it difficult to secure from Anglicans a grave consideration of the case those agitators monopolize and discredit. "Non tali auxilio" is the expression of a mood equally inevitable and unfortunate. The core of the "present discontents" lies in the circumstance that the Alpha and Omega of official policy is to increase episcopal authority, although, for very evident reasons, the episcopate is precisely that element in the hierarchy which least commands popular confidence. Yet apart from popular confidence, how can an increase of episcopal authority provide any remedy for our ills? And how can confidence survive the knowledge that

the most eminent and able of Anglican bishops—for such assuredly was Bishop Creighton—conceived himself bound in duty to sanction as "visitor" the constitution and methods of the convent of St. Mary at the Cross?

At every turn the only remedy officially offered is the authority of the episcopate. Give more power to the bishops; put more trust in the bishops; abandon the attempt to rule the church by law, and adopt instead the personal government of bishops. Legalize the vestments, but control their introduction into the parishes by the veto of the bishop. Educate the candidates for Ordination in seminaries which are admittedly organized on definitely sacerdotal lines, and be sure that a sufficient security against sacerdotalism is the bishop's refusal to ordain the candidates when in due course they come to him for Ordination. Make the bishop sole judge of doctrine, and let the limits of Anglican orthodoxy shrink or expand at his word. This is a new version of the Church of England. We did not break with the pope only to set up the bishop. Our reformation was pre-eminently a national achievement, carried through by process of law, and settled in statutes. Englishmen must have greatly changed if they can be persuaded to substitute for the reign of law the autocracy of as many bishops as there are dioceses. But the reign of law implies a reverence for the fact of nationality, and a belief in the Divine right of the civil power. A National Church cannot long continue if that reverence fails and that belief passes away.

It is not really in the interest of the episcopate

thus to press novel and dubious claims; for, apart from disputable theories and policies altogether, the legitimate claims of the bishops are great enough. As the official leaders of a great Christian society, strong in the confidence of their brethren, amongst whom they are conspicuous not merely by office but by personal goodness, by sacred learning, by apostolic labours, the bishops might (and in some measure do) command the homage of all good citizens, whatever their political or denominational description. Against *such* personal authority there is no law. But the law also gives them much. As the heads of a national Church—the most illustrious, when all is said, of the national Churches now lingering on earth —wielding an administrative authority created, conditioned, and defined by the law, the bishops are venerable in the eyes of all law-loving Englishmen. But if these characters will not satisfy them, and they must pose as spiritual autocrats, wielding an authority derived from sources unknown to the Constitution, exercised independently, and with no recognized limits, the bishops will make a sorry exchange of the general reverence and regard for the precarious servility of such Englishmen as can accept the sacerdotal theory on which their novel claim depends. And from that following will be shut out the most part of the thoughtful, the educated, and the morally strong. Copes, mitres, and pastoral staves have a fine effect in processions, photographs, and pageants, but they are a poor substitute for the deference and regard which once invested the episcopal office in the Reformed Church of England.

VI

OF THE PROTESTANTISM OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

A LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE PARISHIONERS AND CONGREGATION OF ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

AMONG the privileges of my position as your Rector I am disposed to rank highly the right it confers on me to address you from time to time on subjects of general interest affecting the welfare of the Church of England. At the present time the affairs of the Church of England are much debated, and from many points of view. The course adopted by many of the bishops and clergy with respect to the Education Bill has forced into prominence, under the worst possible conditions, the position, claims, and public worth of the Established Church, and it is difficult to doubt that the time will not be long before all these subjects will have come into the sphere of practical politics, that is, when their discussion will have ceased merely to amuse or inflame academic controversialists, and will have engaged the serious

interest of politicians. On the top of the clerical agitation about the schools has come the Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline, with its mass of disquieting evidence, of audacious propositions, of strange law and stranger history, and, most important of all, with its unanimously recommended scheme of revolutionary changes in the system of the National Church. That this scheme is not intended by its authors to remain theoretical must be inferred from the announcement that "Letters of Business" are to be issued to the Convocations with a view to carrying out the recommendations of the Report. All these circumstances gave exceptional importance to the meeting of the Church Congress at Barrow, and this in turn became a new cause of distraction, for its meetings were marked by a sermon and two papers from well-known party-leaders within the Church, which seem to promise dangerous agitation and embittered domestic discord. The Bishop of Birmingham—who, in his vehement opposition to any combined action with the Nonconformists for the purpose of securing the teaching in the State Schools of "Fundamental Christianity" with the Bible as a text-book, has recently declared himself a convert to the old Birmingham policy of secular schools with denominational facilities—has in a remarkable sermon at the Congress, marked by extraordinary fervour of conviction, raised the banner of what I can best describe as sacerdotalist socialism, and this circumstance, following hard upon the publication of his Lordship's evidence before the Commission, and his public assurance to the "extreme"

clergy of his diocese that he would allow and defend their procedure with his episcopal authority, has seemed to indicate his adoption of a political course designed to compel the disestablishment of the National Church. The fervour and eloquence of the bishop's sermon veil, but cannot mitigate, the strange crudity of the thought, and the perilous character of the practical suggestions. Its immediate importance, however, is that of a programme offered to the High Church party by its most energetic and effective leader. The papers read by Lord Halifax and the Dean of Canterbury gain piquancy from the recent and much-emphasized combination of the readers in the refusal, scornful, uncompromising, sustained, of the notion and policy of common teaching of "fundamental Christianity" in the State Schools. The able leader-writer of the *Westminster Gazette*, whose daily comments on current affairs are luminous contributions to political discussion, has sufficiently exposed the grotesque unreality of that combination, when considered in the light of the deliberate declarations of belief which were offered to the Church Congress, and the ever-facile pencil of F. C. G. has taught the same lesson by a different but not less effective method. Both the writer and the artist have a general sympathy with the policy of disestablishment, and perhaps cherish a certain kindness for "ritualism" as a political force always purchasable for disestablishment purposes, and therefore potentially an asset of the Liberal party, but their strong good sense and knowledge of facts, added to a genuine sense of humour, lift both above merely partizan views. Setting side by side

in parallel columns a striking passage from Lord Halifax's paper repudiating the Reformation, and a not less striking extract of a contrary tenour from the Dean's, the leader-writer proceeds:—

> "Thus 'the principles of the Reformation,' which, in Lord Halifax's opinion, are 'things to be repented of with tears and in ashes,' are, in the Dean of Canterbury's opinion, the one hope for the peace of the Church. To the Dean it is all-important for Churchmen to 'uphold strenuously by all their moral and spiritual influence the old Anglican and anti-Roman ideal of their Church,' whereas to Lord Halifax it is 'something greatly in favour of a practice or devotion that it should be used by the vast majority of Christians in Europe'—*i.e.*, by the Romans. Well may the Dean say that 'the recommendations of the Ritual Commissioners involve questions of such vital controversy that Letters of Business can but prove the opening of floodgates of theological and ecclesiastical debate.'"

The writer goes on to point the moral with respect to the educational controversy:—

> "But in the meantime, when we find the Church of England laying claim as an Established Church to a special position for Church teaching in Schools which are maintained by the State, and requiring further, that no other kind of religious teaching shall be given in State Schools, unless this demand is conceded, we are entitled to ask, What is this Church teaching and what are the views of those who are going to impart it? It is not to be confined to 'simple Bible teaching' nor to 'fundamental Christianity,' for these are the very limitations which its advocates most passionately disclaim, and which they impute as fatal defects to the teaching which is proposed for the State. It is avowedly dogmatic teaching which shall uphold their idea of a Church and which shall pass the children through one door into the School and through another door into the Church. Admirable ideals for Churchmen who know what they mean by Church principles and Church doctrines, but again we are entitled to ask, What principles and what

doctrines? The answer, so far as we can gather it from Churchmen themselves, is that at present, however much they may agree about that inadequate thing 'fundamental Christianity,' they are in hopeless disagreement about the specific Church doctrines which they demand should be added to it, and that the attempt to decide them will 'prove the opening of floodgates of theological and ecclesiastical controversy.' Thus if anyone wants to know whether the State School is to be used to teach the Church child that 'the principles of the Reformation are things to be repented of with tears and ashes,' or principles to be 'strenuously upheld by all the moral and spiritual influence of Churchmen,' he must be told that nobody knows, and that there is no authority which can inform him. All that can be said is that both views can be held by different parties in the Church, and that each party claims different portions of the Prayer Book and the Thirty-nine Articles as justifying its position."

The writer concludes by the following trenchant and eminently relevant paragraph:—

"We have never claimed, and do not now claim, to decide which of these parties has the law of the other; still less is it our business to decide matters of faith and doctrine between them. But we may suggest to Lord Halifax that his view is a view which, however enthusiastically upheld by a school of Churchmen, runs counter to the generality of lay opinion. This, rightly or wrongly, insists on regarding the Church of England as a Protestant Church which loyally accepts the principles of the Reformation. If it were generally understood that it was a cardinal aim of the Church to reverse the Reformation and recross the dividing line which separates it from the Roman Church, there would, in our opinion, be a speedy end to the Establishment and to all talk about the special position of Church teaching in Church Schools. But in the meantime we may submit to both these parties that they look a little foolish in denouncing 'simple Bible teaching' and 'fundamental Christianity' when it is plain to everyone else that this and this alone is the bond which unites them even in the Church of England, and that the floodgates of controversy are opened the moment they begin to discuss the specific Church dogmas which they are so anxious to teach to the

children. We do not want these floodgates open to children of tender years, and we can imagine nothing less likely to promote the religious spirit in maturer years."[1]

I am sure this able writer has divined truly the situation in this country. The religion of the English people as a whole is, beyond all question, Christian of a decisively Protestant type, and this fact is not altered by the circumstance that a large number of English clergymen dislike and, as far as they conveniently can, disavow Protestant Christianity. Nor is the essential Protestantism of the English people altered by the circumstance that the natural desire to oppose and embarrass a Liberal Government has induced the general body of Conservatives to lend their support to what is truly at bottom an anti-Protestant agitation. This "fighting alliance" of Protestants like Dean Wace and Sacerdotalists like Lord Halifax and Archbishop Bourne is fortuitous, unreal, and transitory. It may defeat a particular Bill, and even upset a Government which has other vulnerable points, after the manner of Governments, but it cannot bridge the gulf which parts Protestantism from Sacerdotalism, the Middle Ages from the Modern World, the Christianity of the Vatican from that of free-born English folk.

It is a delusion to distinguish so sharply, as is now the clerical fashion, between the English Reformation and the Reformation in Germany or elsewhere. Every historical student can specify the reasons which in every country determined both the success or failure of the reforming movement, and the specific form

[1] *v. Westminster Gazette*, October 5th, 1906.

which the movement received in the different countries in which it finally established itself. Race, climate, relative civilization, polity, the course of events, the masterful individuals who handled the situation—all these left their impress on the Churches of the Reformation, but the broad and deep distinction which marked them off from the unreformed Church belonged to them all, and was not really affected by the circumstance that some retained more and some less of the older system. The Church of England took its place without misgiving among the Protestant Churches, and it is only the visible decay of the political power of the Vatican, and the withdrawal from the established worship of great numbers of the most ardent Protestants in the country, that has made possible the fashionable clerical distinction between Anglicanism and Protestantism. That distinction would have been unintelligible to the greater Anglicans of the past, even of those who might be fairly reckoned as unusually zealous for the distinctive features of the English Church. A single example which I stumbled on in my library the other day, when I was "browsing" among my books, will serve for a sufficient illustration. Few Bishops of London have been more learned and orthodox than Edmund Gibson, who ruled the See from 1720 to 1748. He was the most influential bishop of his time, and was the recognised adviser of the Prime Minister in the management of all ecclesiastical business. His treatise entitled "Synodus Anglicana; or the Constitution and Proceedings of an English Convocation, London, 1702" is the recognized authority on the subject of

which it treats, and his great work entitled "Codex Juris Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, or the Statutes, Constitutions, Canons, Rubrics, and Articles of the Church of England digested under their proper heads, with a commentary historical and juridical, two volumes, fol. London, 1713" is justly described as "a magnificent monument of research." Bishop Gibson, then, may be taken as an authoritative representative of English Churchmanship. Here is a paragraph from his dedication to King William III. of his edition of Camden's "Britannia," which was one of his earliest publications:—

> "May the glorious character of being the Head and Heart of the Protestant Cause in Europe, which your Majesty has asserted with so much zeal and honour, never be separated from the British Diadem! May your example, and those publick Testimonies which you have given of your general care over the whole Protestant Body, teach that whole Body the necessary Lesson of Union, against all the attempts and stratagems of Popery and Superstition!"

It is becoming difficult to imagine a modern bishop, with the fear of his clergy before him, addressing the Sovereign as a Protestant, although at the coronation, when long-obsolete fashions were revived for a great State ceremonial, the abhorred word again made its appearance, and struck the note of reality needed in a pageant which seemed to transport us all to the middle ages.[1]

[1] In the *Westminister Gazette* (October 12th, 1906), the following paragraph appeared:—"The Rev. R. J. Noyes, Vicar of Harborne (near Birmingham), in a speech delivered at Manchester, stated that his congregation had proposed to erect a memorial to their former vicar, and to put into the inscription these words: 'He was a strenuous upholder of the principles of *the Protestant Reformation.*' But to these words the Bishop objected, and the Chancellor of the diocese refused to grant a faculty for the memorial unless the phrase was altered." Bishop

But what do we mean when thus we assert so clearly the Protestant character of the Church of England? What are "the principles of the Reformation"? Do they for ever bind us in doctrine to the formularies of the sixteenth century, and in rites and ceremonies to the rubrics of the Caroline Prayer Book, illustrated by the use of the first six centuries? Are the principles of that great spiritual enfranchisement to be "cribbed, cabined, and confined" within the recorded opinions and ceremonial precedents of the Caroline Divines, or of their feebler copyists, the Tractarians? Is bondage to some system of the past really a principle of the most courageous innovation of Christian history? Lord Halifax finds his authority in a figment of devout fancy called "the Catholic Church"; Dean Wace thinks he has a superior guide in "the first six centuries"; the Church Association has another rule, perhaps even less easy of intelligible statement. Do the principles of the Reformation really require this backward reference for control? If so, why did the authors of the Reformation stake everything on a forward movement away from the authoritative past, and in the teeth of the weightiest protests of existing authority?

I think there is great need that English Churchmen should answer these questions for themselves

Gore was present in the Abbey at the Coronation of the King, and heard His Majesty promise "to the utmost of his power to maintain the laws of God, the true profession of the Gospel, and the *Protestant reformed religion established by law.*" If he means to disallow the word "Protestant" as inapplicable to the Church of England, his lordship will have to carry through a drastic purgation of English literature, as well as effect a revolution in English minds.

before they take part in the eager discussions of the hour. Let me suggest two formulæ for consideration when the task is undertaken. In the first place I suggest the famous phrase of Chillingworth as still on the whole, and with due explanations, sound and satisfactory. "The Bible is the religion of Protestants." In the next place, I will adopt a remarkable sentence from the Gospel, and adapt it to the purpose I have in mind: "God is not the God of the dead but of the living." The first formula gives us our sufficient external authority; the last authorizes our courageous departure from precedent when such departure seems imperatively called for by the facts of the present. Chillingworth lived before the birth of biblical criticism in the modern sense of the phrase, and, accordingly, his great book on the *Religion of Protestants* is compromised in modern eyes by the obsolete manner in which the Bible is quoted, but, with proper allowances, his argument holds water still. The Bible, which in this connection means the New Testament, carries to every honest student the knowledge of the necessary truth. Let me make a quotation worth admitting into any serious man's commonplace book:—

> "But speaking truly and properly, the Scripture is not a Judge, nor cannot be, but only a sufficient Rule, for those to judge by, that believe it to be the Word of God (as the Church of England and the Church of Rome both do) what they are to believe, and what they are not to believe. I say sufficiently perfect, and sufficiently intelligible, in things necessary, to all that have understanding, whether they be learned or unlearned. And my reason hereof is convincing

> and demonstrative, because nothing is necessary to be believed but what is plainly revealed. For to say that when a place of Scripture, by reason of ambiguous terms, lies indifferent between divers senses, whereof one is true and the other is false, that God obliges men, under pain of damnation, not to mistake through error and human frailty, is to make God a tyrant; and to say that He requires us certainly to attain that end, for the attaining whereof we have no certain means. . . . . Which, whether it can consist with His Goodness, with His Wisdom, and with His Word, I can leave it to honest men to judge."[1]

Chillingworth was familiar with the sophistry that claims to unite reverence for the Bible with the sole right of the Church (*i.e.*, the clergy) to interpret it. With a side-glance at the legal tyranny of Charles and Laud he writes:

> "He that would usurp an absolute Lordship and Tyranny over any people, need not put himself to the trouble and difficulty of abrogating and disannulling the laws made to maintain the common liberty; for he may frustrate their intent, and compass his own design as well, if he can get the power and authority to interpret them as he pleases, and add to them what he pleases, and to have his interpretations and additions stand for laws; if he can rule his people by his laws, and his laws by his lawyers. So the Church of Rome, to establish her tyranny over men's consciences, needed not either to abolish or corrupt the Holy Scriptures, the pillars and supports of Christian liberty (which in regard of the numerous multitudes of copies dispersed through all places, translated into almost all languages, guarded with all solicitous care and industry, had been an impossible attempt); but the more expedite way, and therefore more likely to be successful, was to gain the opinion and esteem of the publick and authorized Interpreter of them, and the authority of adding to them what doctrine she pleased, under the title of Traditions or Definitions."[2]

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[1] *v. Religion of Protestants*, 10 Ed., p. 109.
[2] *v. Ibid.*, p. 78.

Chillingworth was absorbed, as were his contemporaries, with the controversy with the Roman Church, and the abiding validity of his reasoning is somewhat obscured by the fact in the present day, when that controversy has become tiresome. He was not concerned with the practical question of teaching in elementary schools, which, of course, compels some reasonable agreement as to the manner in which the Bible shall be set before children. His general argument, however, remains secure, and it cannot possibly be reconciled with the attitude adopted by many Anglican bishops and clergy towards the Bible, as the manual of Fundamental Christianity. Dr. Creighton tells us that "Chillingworth's position and arguments, though interesting to the learned and cultivated, were regarded with abhorrence by zealots on every side. Papists and Puritans alike thought that "he was imperilling religion by resolving faith into reason, and his intellectual tolerance had no charm for them when they were striving for supremacy." But though, "while the great conflict was raging, no one had time to listen to the voice of reason and moderation," we are assured that "the ideas of Chillingworth revived gradually after the Restoration, and were dominant after the Revolution." Perhaps we may dare to hope that another period of calm will follow the present confusions, and that with the recovery of religious sanity, English Churchmen may again return to the tolerant wisdom of the great Latitudinarian.

Protestantism implies, then, the supremacy of the Bible, not in any irrational sense, but because the

Bible contains the most authoritative version we have of the Revelation of God in Christ. Creeds are based on the Bible, and stand or fall with it. No tradition of the Church is as old and trustworthy as that which is contained in the Bible; therefore the Bible is the necessary criterion of tradition. The Church of England used to boast of its exaltation of the Bible, and Chillingworth's formula, "The Bible is the religion of Protestants," was a recognized and valuable summary of Anglicanism.

The Bible, however, albeit supreme, is a collection of ancient documents, and it is in the hands of the Society of Christians for application to the ever-changing life of mankind. The Church depends on the Bible for all its knowledge of the Gospel. The Bible depends on the Church for its access to the society it is competent to illumine with saving knowledge. Let me quote in this connection a notable paragraph from the presidential speech of the Bishop of Carlisle at the Barrow Congress:—

> "One of the most pressing questions which the Oxford Movement has left for our solution is the question, 'What meanest thou by this word Church?' The modern age is beginning to clamour for a more clear definition of the *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus;* and one of the prime duties of every Churchman to-day, at least so it seems to me, is to make as clear as he can to his own mind, that he may also make clear to the minds of others, what he really means by the Church; by the Church's relation to the Christ, and by the Christ's relation to the Church. He ought by the Church to be quite sure whether he means the whole body of the baptized or only a selection of them; whether the Church includes non-Episcopal communions or is limited by descent through Episcopacy;

what is the true nature of a sacrament, and particularly what is the true Christian rank of the second sacrament in the economy of the Gospel; what is the real distinction between the Church visible and invisible; whether the Church governs the doctrines of the Bible or the Bible governs the doctrines of the Church; whether persons may search the Scriptures freely and independently for themselves, or only search them after they have been taught to find nothing else save that for which they have been authorized to look; whether tradition has the authority of truth, or truth be indispensable to the authority of tradition; whether any Council since the Apostolic days has been so free from error as to claim infallibility for its decrees; on what precise grounds and to what extent the opinions of ancient fathers are of greater value than those of modern theologians and divines; whether God the Holy Ghost be not as much the Living Guide of the Church in the twentieth as in any preceding century; whether the Church is a dead edifice walled in by the barriers of the past, or a living organism glorying in its ancestry, yet receiving direct from God in each succeeding age the moral strength and spiritual elevation which that age requires. These and other similar questions are demanding to-day, with fresh and increasing pressure, a clear and intelligent answer."

"God is not the God of the dead but of the living"—that word of Christ suggests the true answer to the challenges of the Bishop. A Church which glories in the courageous departure from sacred precedents involved in the process of ecclesiastical disruption and doctrinal reform in the XVIth century, cannot without self-stultification adopt an obscurantist attitude in any subsequent century.

Not in the past only but in the present also are we to find the footsteps of the Lord, ruling His Church by the Power and illumination of the Holy Ghost. Neither the XVIth century, nor the first six centuries,

nor the Apostolic age itself, can serve our turn to-day. We are confronted by wholly novel conditions of thought and life, and whatever solution of our problems shall be found, one thing is certain, that they will involve great revisions of theology and of religious system. Only one factor of Christianity is stable and unchanging through all ages and under all conditions, and that factor is the chief, the sole essential, the Divine element in the religion we profess. "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, and to-day, yea and for ever."

You will understand, then, that I, as a member of Convocation, approach the consideration of whatever proposals may be submitted to that assembly with an absolutely open mind. The precedents of the past are to my thinking valuable for warning and guidance, but not possessed of any greater claim to our regard. I would like to print over the door of the Convocation Hall this sentence of St. Paul: "With freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage." And inasmuch as we of the Church of England are at this moment grievously injured in character and reputation by violent domestic strife, I would add the more personal appeal of the great Apostle: "For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another, for the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Assuredly, when I muse on the present situation in Church

and State, I find complete relevance to our position as English Churchmen in St. Paul's warning: "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

I am always your faithful friend and servant,

H. HENSLEY HENSON.

October, 1906.

VII

OF THE DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER MARRIAGE ACT, 1907

AN OPEN LETTER TO HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

MY LORD ARCHBISHOP.

I TAKE leave to adopt the familiar literary device of an "Open Letter" in order to confess to you the grave perplexities which shadow my mind when I reflect on the course I must take with respect to the new Marriage Act, and to make as clear as I can the reasons why I find myself unable to accept the advice which your Grace has offered to the Clergy in the matter. A certain distinctiveness of interest attaches to the position which the famous parish church of St. Margaret, Westminster, shall be made to hold, and I feel deeply the gravity of the responsibility placed on me as Rector of deciding what that position shall be.

The members of the House of Commons have for nearly three centuries been officially connected with

St. Margaret's, and they could hardly avoid feeling as an affront any action on my part which conspicuously branded as anti-Christian and immoral an Act which had been just passed with a remarkable display of Parliamentary agreement. What the sentiments of the present House of Commons are on the subject of marriage with a deceased wife's sister may be sufficiently indicated by the fact that less than forty out of six hundred and seventy members were found to vote against the Bill: and that these sentiments are not peculiar to the present House is shown by the long history of the agitation which has now attained success. Ought I to announce that the official church of the House of Commons will be closed against those who may desire to be married under the Act? Ought I, as Rector, to proclaim in advance as "open and notorious evil livers" all who shall have been married under the Act, and pledge myself to refuse the Holy Communion if they should present themselves at the Communion rail of St. Margaret's? Undoubtedly I ought to do this if marriage with a deceased wife's sister be an incestuous union, as the 99th Canon asserts; and, since the Act gives me an option, there could be no possible excuse for my not performing my duty, if indeed it were so plain as that Canon would make it. I should expose myself to well deserved contempt if I held back from asserting the Divine Law of Marriage simply out of deference to the known wishes of Parliament, or to any pressures of social opinion: but before taking a course of action, which incidentally brands the Legislature of my country with the infamous

patronage of incest, I am surely bound to be quite clear in my mind that it *is* the Divine Law of Marriage, and not some conventional and properly mutable rule which I am at such cost to assert. Some persons there are, indeed, who will maintain that the legal option which the clergyman possesses under the Act ought not to be exercised against the expressed counsels, and even exhortations, of the Bishops, and that the responsibility which the Law places on the parish clergyman ought as a matter of course to be surrendered to the Episcopate, but your Grace will not expect that I should accept a view of duty so novel, so humiliating, and so irrational. The Bishops have their burden, and a heavy one; let them bear it like men, and not resent in the clergy the same virile temper of responsibility which they would covet for themselves. I am well assured that I shall lose nothing in your Grace's regard by dissociating myself with becoming contempt from the servile doctrines of clerical obedience which are now current, and accepting frankly the important option which the Law has imposed on me.

There are, then, certain broad considerations which occur to my mind as deserving very careful attention, and which, after being thus weighed, bring me to the conclusion that the Rector of St. Margaret's could not fitly refuse, and ought not to refuse, the use of that church for the celebration of marriages under the Act, and that he would be acting in a lawless and wholly indefensible manner if he announced his determination to refuse the Holy Communion to those who,

having been married under the Act, presented themselves at the Communion rail. I take leave to place these considerations before your Grace and before the public, in order that none may suppose that a decision of such importance has been reached lightly.

I. Inexpediency not the Equivalent of Immorality.

In the first place, I respectfully submit to your Grace that marriage with a deceased wife's sister has not been shown to be intrinsically immoral, and cannot be shown to be so. The doctrine of the 99th Canon is not seriously held in any quarter, even in quarters where the language of an extreme deference to "canon law" has become a fashionable cant. The Canon, indeed, brands such marriage as infamous:—

> "No person shall marry within the degrees prohibited by the laws of God, and expressed in a table set forth by authority in the year of our Lord God 1563. And all marriages so made and contracted shall be adjudged incestuous and unlawful, and consequently shall be dissolved as void from the beginning, and the parties so married shall by course of law be separated. And the aforesaid table shall be in every church publicly set up and fixed at the charge of the parish."

It is interesting and not wholly unimportant to recall the history of the "table" thus canonically exalted into a binding declaration of Divine Law. Strype, in his life of Archbishop Parker, gives the following account of its origin:—

> "The Archbishop this year (1560) set forth 'An Admonition for the Necessity of the present Time, till a

> further Consultation, to all such as shall intend hereafter to enter the State of Matrimony godly, and agreeable to Law. This he found highly needful, because of the lawless and incestuous marriages that in these times had much prevailed. This same Admonition was printed, and appointed to be set up in churches. And the observation of this order is still required, as is ordinarily to be seen in the churches of the kingdom to this day, the Admonition hanging up in all parish churches."[1]

The next year, 1561, the Archbishop consulted Bishop Jewel "concerning the lawfulness of marrying two sisters successively," and received a letter deciding in the negative. The letter is printed in the Appendix XIX. to the *Life* (book II.), and is worth reading. It reveals the uncertainty of the Archbishop's mind on the subject, and the evident desire on the part of the great controversialist of the time to avoid yielding a point to Rome by recognizing the legitimacy of the dispensations for marrying sisters-in-law, which were then, as ever since, issued by the authorities of that Church. The table, then, forms no part of the Prayer Book, and is inserted into it without authority. It rests entirely on the 99th Canon of 1604.

The doctrine of that Canon, however, is certainly not held by your Grace, for otherwise it would have been impossible for you to give a public pledge in the House of Lords that you would exert yourself to make the Act work smoothly; you would not have censured Lord Hugh Cecil for using "wild and improper words" when he described as "an act of sexual vice" what the Canon declares to be "incestuous"; you would not have deprecated "harsh and

[1] *v. Life*, vol. I., p. 174. Oxford, 1821.

uncharitable words" in respect to unions which, if the doctrine of the 99th Canon be seriously accepted, could not be described in terms too harsh for that charity which, as the Apostle tells us, "rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth"; you could not have declared without some expression of indignation or horror your knowledge, that "there are many good Christian men who believe that these marriages, now sanctioned by the law of the land, are also compatible with what they regard as a true interpretation of the teaching of Holy Scripture, and even of the Early Church, respecting marriage." All this is quite inconsistent with the conviction that marriage with a deceased wife's sister is an infamous union properly condemned as "incestuous." Your Grace, moreover, does not stand alone in repudiating the doctrine of the 99th Canon. The Bishop of Liverpool writes to his diocese that "it would be wrong to say that the Act legalizes a marriage union which is sinful or immoral." The Act, however, does legalize a marriage which the 99th Canon declares to be "incestuous" and "prohibited by the laws of God." And if that be true doctrine, how can such marriage be other than sinful and immoral in the extremest degree? Obviously the Bishop believes the declaration of the 99th Canon as little as your Grace.

I am almost ashamed of labouring a point which—outside some fanatical coteries whose appetite for canonical doctrine is insatiable—is not disputed, and if it were not that the whole issue really depends on the point, whether the newly legalized marriages are immoral or only inexpedient, I would not dwell at

such length on this part of my argument. When I examine the grounds alleged for the canonical theory, I find that they resolve themselves into two, and, as far as I can discover, two only. There is the passage in Leviticus, which the letter-worshipping tradition of Christendom describes as "the Law of God," and there is the patristic gloss on that passage which makes it extend to the case of the deceased wife's sister. Bishop Jewel's argument is entirely built on those two propositions. In Leviticus there is the Divine Law, and the Law must so be read as to cover the case of the deceased wife's sister. Neither of these propositions seems to me tenable. I do not accept the text of Leviticus as a sufficient declaration of the Divine Law; and I cannot allow the validity of the exegesis which reads into the text of Scripture what is not there. Moreover, the practice of the Roman Church (which only the narrowest bigotry can refuse to regard as the weightiest representative on such a matter of the Divine Society of Christ's disciples) is well-known to be inconsistent with the theory of the 99th Canon. Marriage with a deceased wife's sister is not held to be contrary to the Christian Law, but regarded as a mere matter of ecclesiastical legislation, and as such is constantly permitted by way of dispensation. The Duke of Norfolk brought out this point clearly in debate on the second reading of the Bill:—

> "The Church of Rome did not uphold the theory that this particular act was in itself an immoral one, they did not maintain that it was against the law of God, but that it was against the enactments of the Church, and that being so,

when other circumstances were deemed to be of greater moment, dispensations had been granted."

In a long letter addressed by Dr. Pusey to Mr. Gladstone in 1849, and published in Dr. Liddon's *Life*, there is a highly instructive passage in which the Roman view is referred to :—

> "You mention a great difficulty as to the State. Certainly the more the State detaches itself from the Church of England, the greater the difficulty is on these subjects. For it has no guide but the Church ; and if it rejects that, it must flounder endlessly. I see not what standard it can substitute. Some, I hear, feel that it is hard to affix State penalties to that which the Roman Church allows by dispensations. Practically, however, the Roman Catholic marriages of the wife's sister are among the lower orders who are not affected by laws as to property. They would take it as a concession, but do not want it."[1]

Apparently the eminent Tractarian excluded from his conception of "the Church," which has guided the State, that vast community from which the Church of England itself drew its being, and allowed the legitimacy of the argument that the poor, because being poor their property rights would call for small notice from the State, might be left under legal disabilities which might well be found intolerable by the rich !

If, then, marriage with a deceased wife's sister be no breach of the Divine Law, but only a union held to be ordinarily inexpedient, and therefore in any particular case to be permitted by ecclesiastical dispensation, the whole aspect of the discussion is changed. The point is really no more than this. Experience having demonstrated the impossibility of rigidly prohibiting these marriages, and the Church

[1] *v. Life*, vol. III., p. 184.

by its most authoritative representative having provided for them by an elastic system of dispensations, what instrument shall be devised for doing for Protestants what the Papal prerogative has long done for Roman Catholics? Parliament has but exercised the dispensing power which the Pope has been exercising from time immemorial. Shall the latter be exalted by an English Churchman above the former? Is it not exactly according to the whole method and spirit of a national reformation of Religion that the powers wielded by a foreign authority should be transferred to the national Legislature? In neither case is there any question of authorizing a violation of the Divine Law. That is equally wrong, though not equally scandalous, in both cases. The Church may condone incest as little as the State. An ecclesiastical dispensation to violate the moral law is worth no more than a legally conferred option. If there is to be a dispensing power in England, I for one prefer that of the national Legislature to that of any ecclesiastical authority I can imagine. I claim, then, to be in an impregnable position when I assert that the practical questions—shall I, as Rector of St. Margaret's, Westminster, permit these marriages to be celebrated in that church? shall I myself celebrate such marriages? shall I admit to Holy Communion those who have so married?—are to be debated and answered, not on the lofty plane of fundamental morals, but on the lower level of expediency. I admit freely to your Grace that on the point of expediency I was against the Bill, and had any opportunity been given to me, I should certainly

have argued and voted against it. It is futile now to set forth the reasons which seemed to me to require such an attitude, but I refer to them in order to point out, that the passing of the law affects most materially the question of expediency. Herein, if I have rightly apprehended the drift of your Grace's speech in the House of Lords, I have the happiness of possessing your agreement. You resist a measure which none the less you pledge yourself to make, so far as lies in your power, successful. So far as your Grace is concerned, the new Marriage Law shall work smoothly. Herein I suppose your Grace to adopt a thoroughly constitutional attitude, and one, moreover, which is profoundly reasonable. The enactment of the new law does alter most importantly the whole aspect of the question. We have now to make our count with the declared will of the State; we must consider whether, on a matter admittedly not fundamental, we will set ourselves in opposition to the law of the land, either directly by infringing the legal rights of citizens, or indirectly by exerting our influence to bring the law into contempt. Can anything short of a fundamental issue of faith or morals justify a Christian citizen in adopting towards the State an attitude of opposition and contempt? Is it reasonable for an individual citizen to rate his own estimate of what is expedient for the nation above the legally expressed estimate of the national Legislature? Where else shall the dividing line between the claims of Cæsar and the claims of God be traced, than where the distinction is perceived between the essentially moral and the expedient or contingently moral? If

on a matter admittedly merely expedient, I insist on my duty as a Christian to resist or belittle the authority of the State, what limits to civil disobedience shall henceforth be recognized as binding on my conscience? Since I cannot honestly say that marriage with a deceased wife's sister is morally wrong, what ground have I for striving to make it socially disreputable, and for treating it as ecclesiastically scandalous? How can I rightly denounce as "open and notorious evil livers" those who on my own showing have broken no Divine law, and have but sought from the only authority within their reach the dispensation which, if they had been members of the Roman Church, they would without difficulty have obtained from their clergy? Frankly, your Grace, I hold it to be not merely inexpedient, but morally wrong, for me to adopt the attitude which these questions outline, and which is being eagerly advocated by many of the clergy.

II. The Canon Law not Properly Relevant to the Discussion.

I have elsewhere called attention to the implied suggestion, quite groundless as I maintain, but none the less widely accepted by the clergy, and explicitly affirmed by some of the Bishops, that the Canon Law is binding on the English clergy in such wise, that not even a statute of the realm can relieve them from its obligation *in foro conscientiæ*. It is assumed that there is a "law of the Church," from which not even

the statute can set a clergyman free, and that this unaltered and Divinely obligatory law is contained in "the Canons." Let it be observed that these terms stand in great need of exact definition. What is meant by the Canon Law? Is it the mass of the "Corpus Juris Canonici," so far as that voluminous jurisprudence has not been set aside by statute, custom, prerogative, and common law? Is it in addition such portions of it as in the opinion of ecclesiastics have been wrongly set aside by the national authority? Is it merely that part of the Corpus which has a local origin, consisting of the canons and constitutions drawn up at national Councils and provincial Convocations? Is it merely the post-Reformation Canons of the English Church? There is great necessity that a clear understanding should be reached as to the nature and extent of that sacred legislation, which is held to be binding on the clergy *Divino jure*. When a few years since the Bishops were endeavouring not very successfully to bring the "Ritualists" into some kind of order, your Grace will remember that their Lordships were often pressed with appeals to the "Canon Law." They manifested a not unnatural impatience. Some observations by that eminently learned Bishop, who, beyond most of his episcopal brethren, could speak with the authority of exact and ample knowledge on the subject, I mean Bishop Stubbs, will not be out of place in the present argument:—

> "I am afraid that notwithstanding all that has been said and written about the Canon Law in late years, I cannot regard the *Corpus Juris Canonici* as containing for

> individual clergymen any directive authority. Whatever may have been its status as compared with Common Law and Statute Law before the Reformation, and its relation to the administration of the Courts of England—and on this, as some of you may be aware, my own conclusions have been seriously questioned by lawyers and clergy lately—I cannot believe that there ever was a time when it was possible, or that there is now a right for anyone bound by loyal sanctions to the law of the Church of England, and the authority which he acknowledges in his ordination, to pick out of a great mass of jurisprudence, most of whose conditions are altogether passed away, a system by which he should consider himself, his conscience, or his school, to be bound.
>
> "And if not in the Corpus Juris (in which the men of the Reformation did recognize some scintillæ of legality to inhere, until they were able to produce their substitute, a substitute which was only produced to be rejected), how can it be found in the texts and rubrics of the Missal or other service books which were and are explicitly disavowed in the Church and her services as well as in her jurisprudence? I say no more about it." [1]

"What people call 'the law of the Church,'" wrote Bishop Creighton to Archbishop Benson in 1895, "became unworkable when dispensations were cut off." [2] None the less, the clergy are now authoritatively informed that they are bound by "the law of the Church," and the new Marriage Act provides expressly that they shall remain subject to "ecclesiastical censure" if they avail themselves of its provisions. The Bishop of Salisbury, reputed to be the most erudite member of the Episcopal Bench, has reminded the clergy of his diocese that they are still bound by Canon Law. What is the exact significance of such declarations?

[1] *v.* Visitation Charge 1899 printed in *Visitation Charges*, p. 339.
[2] *v. Life*, vol. II., 69.

It is admittedly the case that, by what might almost be called an accident, the whole mass of the existing Canon Law was at the Reformation left in a doubtful position, not wholly abrogated, yet mostly, and that in the most vital points, disallowed by the Submission of the Clergy. The intention of the Reformers was to revise the Canons, and the abortive "Reformatio Legum" survives as a monument of a laborious but unsuccessful attempt to carry that intention into effect. In 1604 a code of Anglican Canons was enacted, but never specifically incorporated in a statute. Their legal authority was contested at the time, and it was decided rather absurdly that the clergy alone were subject to it. Even so, however, there remained the former ambiguity as to the mediæval Canon Law, and that unfinished part of the Reformation has been a fruitful source of confusion ever since. Yet one point would appear to be beyond dispute. Whatever authority is conceded to the Canon Law must not be understood to imply any recognition of its super-national character. This is clearly stated in the preamble of the statute of 25 Henry VIII., c. 21. There it is recited, that "this realm, *recognizing no superior under God but only the king*, hath been and is free from subjection to any man's laws, but only to such as have been devised, made, and obtained within this realm, for the wealth of the same, or to such other, as by sufferance of the king and his progenitors, the people of this realm have taken at their free liberty by their own consent to be used amongst them, and have bound themselves by long use and custom to

the observance of the same, not as to the observance of the laws of any foreign prince, potentate, or prelate, but as to the accustomed and ancient laws of this realm, originally established as laws of the same, by the said sufferance, consents and custom, and none otherwise." It makes no matter that the historical statements of the preamble are more confident than accurate; the principle enunciated was the very basis of the whole legal Reformation. That there should be one, and one only, fountain of law within the realm; that the dualism of the mediæval epoch should be at once and for ever abolished; that the clergy of the National Church should be fully and finally included within the category of citizens owning an undivided allegiance to the Sovereign, and obeying the general laws of the realm—these are the postulates of the English Reformation, and the first principles of Anglicanism. Phillimore quotes the very apposite language of Lord Hale as to the nature of the authority conceded to other than the home-made laws of England:—

> "Lord Hale says, that neither the canon nor the civil law has any obligations as laws within this realm, upon any account that the popes or emperors made those laws, canons, rescripts or determinations, or because Justinian compiled their body of the civil law, and by his edicts confirmed and published the same as authentical, or because this or that Council or Pope made those or these canons or decrees, or because Gratian or Gregory, or Boniface or Clement did (as much as in them lay) authenticate this or that body of canons or constitutions; for the King of England does not recognize any for authority as superior or equal to him in this Kingdom, neither do any laws of the Pope or Emperor, as they are such, bind here: but all the strength that either the papal or imperial laws

> have obtained in this kingdom, is only because they have been received and admitted either by the consent of Parliament, and so are part of the statute laws of the kingdom, or else by immemorial usage and custom in some particular cases and courts, and no otherwise; and therefore so far as such laws are received and allowed of here, so far they obtain and no farther; and the authority and force they have here is not founded on, or derived from themselves, for so they bind no more with us, than our laws bind in Rome or Italy. But their authority is founded merely on their being admitted and received by us, which alone gives them their authoritative essence and qualifies their obligation."[1]

It appears to be clear enough, then, that the mere perpetuation for some purposes of the mediæval Canon Law did by no means imply the recognition of any "law of the Church" apart from the law of the State, and having independent sanctions. It is, moreover, important to remember that the Canon Law which was current in England during the middle ages, and alone is referred to in the Statutes of the Reformation, was the Papal Law, created by, and enforced by, the authority of the Pope, which was never so heartily and fully recognized as by the English Church. Professor Maitland finally disposed of the popular Anglican fiction of a mediæval national Church administering a local ecclesiastical law, and disallowing the obligation of the "common law" of the Church Catholic governed by the Pope jure Divino.

> "Too often," he writes, "we speak of 'the Church of England,' and forget that there was no ecclesiastically organized body that answered to that name. No tie of an ecclesiastical or spiritual kind bound the Bishop of Chichester to the Bishop of Carlisle, except that which

[1] *v. Ecclesiastical Law*, vol. II., p. 1437.

bound them both to French and Spanish Bishops. On the other hand, papal justice knew no geographical bounds, at least in the Occident." [1]

Professor Maitland's observations as to the effect of the Reformation on the legal system of the English Church are very apposite to the present discussion :—

"In the first place, we have come upon what must be called a sudden catastrophe in the history of the spiritual courts. Henceforth they are expected to enforce, and without complaint they do enforce, statutes of the temporal legislature, Acts of the English Parliament. Henceforth not only is their sphere of action limited by the secular power—that is a very old phenomenon—but their decisions are dictated to them by Acts of Parliament—and that is a very new phenomenon. To take but one example, from 1540 onwards the marriage law that they administer is in great measure law dictated by an Act of Parliament which has at one stroke and with many opprobrious words consigned to oblivion vast masses of intricate old Canon Law relating to consanguinity and affinity.

"In the second place, these Acts of Parliament which the ecclesiastical courts must now administer are imposing upon them not merely new law but a theory about the old law, and it is in substance just that theory the truth of which is here in question. Henceforth a statutory orthodoxy will compel all judges to say that it was only 'by their own consent' that the people of this realm ever paid any regard to decretals or other laws proceeding from any 'foreign prince, potentate, or prelate.' What is more, the same statutes will eloquently inculcate a free criticism of the old law—nay, a contempt for and a righteous indignation against certain portions of it. The Bishop of Rome (called the Pope) has during some indefinitely lengthy age been 'abusing and beguiling,' 'intangling and troubling,' the king's lieges 'by making unlawful what by God's word is lawful both in marriages and other things.' And now the king, who 'is otherwise by learning taught than his predecessors in times past of long time have been,' has discovered the fraud, and is going to annul and extirp much that has passed for law. Ecclesiastical judges who

[1] *v. Canon Law in the Church of England*, p. 114.

are expected to put in force these statutes will, without doubt, be 'otherwise by learning taught than their predecessors in times past of long time have been.' Some of these ecclesiastical judges will be laymen, who would have been incapable of sitting on the judgment seat to declare the law of the Church, were it not for a statute which has swept away divers constitutions of the Bishop of Rome and 'his adherents' the Bishops of England, and at the same time has proclaimed that 'by the word of God' the king has and has always had full power and authority to exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction. It seems to me, therefore, that if we suppose that in the reign of Henry VIII. a new doctrine about the decretals began to prevail in the spiritual courts of this country, we are not supposing a change for which no adequate cause can be assigned.

"But the great breach of continuity has yet to be noted. The academic study of the Canon Law was prohibited. No step that Henry took was more momentous. He cut the very life thread of the old learning. The ecclesiastical judges in time to come might administer such of the ancient rules as were not contrariant nor repugnant to the laws (newly interpreted) of God and the statutes of our lord the king; but they would not have been, like their predecessors in time past, steeped and soaked for many a year in the papal law-books and their ultrapapal glosses. And, as if this were not enough, Henry encouraged and endowed the study of 'the civil law,' and the unhallowed civilian usurped the place of the canonist on the bench."[1]

I make no apology for so long a quotation, for it carries straight to the heart of my argument. This appeal to a separate "law of the Church," contained in the Canons, implies really, although probably few of the Bishops realized this aspect of their contention, a repudiation of the very principle of the English Reformation. If the English State passes laws which are really inconsistent with loyalty to the Religion of Christ, it will unquestionably be the duty of such citizens as perceive the inconsistency to disobey those

[1] *v. Ibid.*, p. 90f.

laws, but no mere conflict between the statutes and the Canons can possibly for a constitutional English Churchman have an aspect so grave. The Canons have no validity or legal existence when the statute has covered the ground which they up to that point had covered. The law of the Church of England cannot be other than the law of England. Nor will any prudent Christian be hasty to describe the automatic revision of the Canons by the statute as a departure from Christianity. In the case of marriage with a deceased wife's sister, it is admitted by your Grace that Christian opinion is divided even within the English Church; it is well known that the rigid doctrine of the 99th Canon of 1604 is not accepted, even nominally, by other Churches; it is certain that the immense majority even of those who opposed the Bill did so on grounds, not of high moral obligation, but of expediency. If this be so, then it cannot but be asked what is that "ecclesiastical censure" to which under the Act the clergy are exposed who do that which the law of the land permits, aud which the highest ecclesiastical authorities perforce allow to be neither sinful nor immoral?

When once the Canon Law is given an independent existence, and allowed to have a claim to the obedience of a clergyman which is not derived from the law of the land, many difficult and important questions immediately arise. The clergy, your Grace is reported to have said in the House of Lords, are "under other obligations besides those they owed to the State." If you merely meant that the clergy owe an obedience to their own consciences which is

superior to that of any other claimant on them, or that no legislation of the State which does violence to the faith and morals of the Gospel must be acquiesced in by them and obeyed, none can dispute the statement, but in that case your Grace's words were no more applicable to the clergy than to any other Christians, or to the legislation of the State than to that of the Church.

III. The Canons of 1604 Properly Obsolete.

If I rightly apprehend your Grace's position, the "law of the Church," which is to be distinguished from the law of the State, is not a part of the "Corpus Juris Canonici" of the Middle Ages, but the Canons of 1604 only. To adopt the other position, and to claim authority for the mediæval Canon Law, leads quickly to absurdities so evident and so extreme that no reflective Anglican, who was not blinded by party spirit, could seriously maintain it. The Canons of 1604, whatever else they may be, are a categorical repudiation of the authority of that *commune jus* of the Middle Ages, which rested on the plenary authority of the Pope for its title to Christian obedience. The 1st Canon establishes in the amplest terms the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Sovereign, and that royal supremacy itself involves the rejection of a legal system built up on the hypothesis of the Papal Sovereignty. The Canon, it need hardly be said, is not obeyed by anybody, but it states

the fundamental doctrine of seventeenth century Anglicanism:—

> "Furthermore, all ecclesiastical persons having cure of souls, and all other preachers and readers of divinity lectures, shall, to the uttermost of their wit, knowledge and learning, purely and sincerely, without any colour or dissimulation, teach, manifest, open, and declare, *four times every year at least*, in their sermons and other collations and lectures, that all usurped and foreign power (forasmuch as the same hath no establishment nor ground by the law of God) is for most just causes taken away and abolished: and that therefore no manner of obedience, or subjection, within his Majesty's realms and dominions, is due unto any such foreign power, but that *the King's power within his realms of England, Scotland and Ireland, and all other his dominions and countries, is the highest power under God;* to whom all men, as well inhabitants as born within the same, do by God's laws owe most loyalty and obedience, afore and above all other powers and potentates in the earth."

"The law of the Church," then, cannot possibly represent any other authority than that of the Sovereign, and how obedience to "the King's Ecclesiastical Law" is to be separated from submission to the State it is quite beyond me to understand. The Canons of 1604 have whatever authority they possess simply and solely from the Royal Authority. Your Grace has promised in due course "to explain the reasons" which have dictated your letter in the *Canterbury Diocesan Gazette*. I beg with the uttermost respect to submit that the clergy are fairly entitled to something more. We are being referred to the Canons; at the instance of the Episcopal Bench, Parliament has *for the first time since the Reformation* excluded the clergy from the general law, and subjected them to limitations of personal liberty

which affect no other citizens. Incidentally the principle affirmed in the XXXIInd Article (viz., that it is lawful for the clergy, *as for all other Christian men*, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness) has been set aside, and once more, as in the middle ages, there is a difference established between the clergy and the laity. The latter have one Marriage Law, the former have another and a severer. That is legally permissible in the layman which is punishable as incestuous in the clergyman. The Blessing of the Church may be asked for and obtained by the layman who marries his deceased wife's sister; but the clergyman who does the same will be subjected to such "ecclesiastical censures" as "the law of the Church" assigns to incest. This grotesque situation has been deliberately created, and we, who are wholly without responsibility for the absurdities in which we are now invested, have a right to seek from our leaders some explanations.

We want to know how far the Canons of 1604 are binding on us? What is to be understood by the "ecclesiastical censure" to which we are statutably exposed if we elect to avail ourselves of the new Marriage Law? How are we to make clear to our congregations the gravity of incest when we are permitted to bless unions which for ourselves we are required to think incestuous? The Canons of 1604 are the elaborate exposition of theories of the Church, of the Ministry, of the Royal prerogative, of pastoral duty, which were never, even in the seventeenth century, universally accepted in England,

which, so soon as they were seriously reduced to action by Archbishop Laud, precipitated a revolution so violent that the entire fabric of the National Church was brought to destruction, which could not be restored even in the reactionary enthusiasm of the Restoration, and which were definitely discarded at the Revolution. How far are these theories to be treated now as the authoritative exposition of the Anglican system?

Your Grace must pardon me for being insistent, but so far as I am able to understand the teaching of the Canons of 1604, they disallow most of the concerns which engage the serious thought of English Churchmen at the present time. Prayer-book revision, better relations with the Nonconformists, Church reform, Biblical criticism, all preaching which takes account of the new learning of the modern epoch, tolerance towards the Roman Catholics, religious discussions between the clergy—all are totally prohibited by the Canons of 1604. The truth, of course, is known to every student of our ecclesiastical history. These Canons expressed the aspirations of a clerical faction, which under the personal influence of the Stuarts was allowed to attain supremacy within the hierarchy; they were never capable of being generally enforced, and are now in theory and precept quite obsolete. But there they are; and, as we have now been authoritatively informed, they bind us even against a statute. They can be drawn upon for the ill purposes of the bigot, and the obscurantist: they are of no service whatsoever in the cause of sound discipline. Your Grace owes it to the clergy,

and, indeed, to the nation itself, to make quite clear how far these Canons of 1604 are by yourself, and by the Bench of Bishops, regarded as legally and morally binding on the clergy, what is the worth of their impossible declarations of doctrine, and what the importance of their fierce and frequent anathemas.

Until I am shown good reasons to the contrary, I must needs maintain that the appeal to a "law of the Church" contained in the Canons of 1604, and binding *in foro conscientiæ* the clergyman even against a statute of the realm, is both unconstitutional and futile. It is the first, because it traverses the fundamental principle of the English Reformation; it is the last, because it refers us to an authority which, on consideration, is found to be almost entirely obsolete.

IV. Parish Churches are not the Private Chapels of the Incumbents.

The new Marriage Act is as little careful of the rights of parishioners as of the liberty of parish clergymen. Under its provisions, a parishioner can at the will of the incumbent be refused the use of the parish church for a perfectly legal purpose. In fact, the law permits a parish clergyman to heap the deadliest insult on parishioners by publicly stamping as "incestuous" the union they have contracted according to law. Side by side there may, there probably will, be parishes in one of which a marriage under the Act will be solemnized with the familiar service of the English Church, in the other such

marriages will be prohibited as "incestuous"! Could the slovenly haste of legislation at the end of a session be better illustrated? and could the cynical contempt of principle which marks popular law-making be more glaringly exhibited? But, your Grace, what shall I do with St. Margaret's? Shall I avail myself of the folly of unreflecting compromise which inserted this option into the Act in order to make the famous Parish Church, which as "parson" I control in trust for its true owners the people of Westminster, the instrument for exhibiting my private preferences, or even my personal opinions? Frankly, my Lord Archbishop, to do this would seem to me all one with a public repudiation of my claim to be something other than the Minister of a Denomination, to be the officer of a National Church, and the representative in matters of religion of the whole body of the parishioners. For what is the "parson," and why is he so described? The dictionary tells me that "parson" is the equivalent of "person," and explains its application to the parish clergyman by the fact that he is the representative of all the parishioners, their impersonation for the common purposes of religion. The parson "omnium personam in ecclesia sustinet." The freehold of the fabric is vested in the parson in trust for the parishioners, not for the service of his private interest, or for the advertisement of his personal opinions. Half our ritualistic difficulties have arisen from the contempt with which the rights of the parishioners in the parish churches have been treated; and the most hopeful solution of the problem of ceremonial individualism seems to many among us to

lie in the recovery and recognition of the forgotten rights of the parishioners.

Now, for the first time, the separate interest and authority of the parish clergyman is entrenched in the Statute Book. Against the clause in the new Act, however, stands the whole tradition of the Law; and I prefer the latter to the former as a guide to my conduct. I recognize, of course, the justice of making provision for the clergyman's conscientious objection to celebrate such marriages as the Act legalizes. To give him an option to decline to do this appears equally just and statesmanlike. But there must be a limit set to the recognition of individual rights which run counter to the general will, and that limit cannot but be fixed at the point where such recognition trespasses upon the general rights. Why should the parishioner's right to the use of the parish church be made to depend on the private opinion of the parish clergyman? How is the clergman's conscience injured by the recognition of the other's rights? Was it realized by the Legislature, when it hustled the Act through by the help of hastily improvised compromises with the Bishops, that a larger injury was being created by the means adopted to protect the clergyman's conscience? Nor has the new confusion really mitigated the old grievance. Some clergymen conscientiously object to marrying with the Prayer Book Service those who are unbaptized, or even those who are unconfirmed, and non-communicant. Will the law sustain them in their objection? Some clergymen object (and surely with good reason) far more strongly to the re-marriage of a guilty divorcé than to the

marriage with a deceased wife's sister, yet the former is legally authorized in the Church against the parson's will, while the latter is made contingent on his approval. There is no end to the anomalies, confusions, absurdities, invasions of equity, which follow on a departure from the clear distinction between the clergyman's legitimate claim as a man, and his indispensable obligations as an official. When a change in the law inflicts a wound on his conscience he is so far justified in claiming relief, but he cannot claim such relief as wounds the consciences of others, equally entitled with himself to the consideration of Parliament. In arguing thus I am not forgetting the position adopted by your Grace in debate. I quote from the report in the *Times*:—

> "It might be said that the clergyman might perform the marriage or not, as he liked; and therefore that there was no compulsion in the Bill. But under the Bill as it stood the clergyman of the parish must lend his church for the marriage if he were asked to do so by the parties and they thought they could find another clergyman to marry them. That meant that the clergyman of the parish must give the church, which had been solemnly committed to his care, for a ceremony to which he was opposed, must call the banns beforehand, must make arrangements for the marriage, must see that it was properly registered; and thereby he became a contributory party to a proceeding which he felt to be wrong."

With all due deference, I submit to your Grace that there are two broad fallacies underlying such an argument. In the first place, the church is not rightly to be described as the incumbent's church, but as the parish church of which the incumbent is custodian, and even by a legal fiction owner, for

specific purposes. In the next place, it is not the case that the performance of legal duty necessarily carries the testimony of personal approval. Responsibility rests on the law, not on the individual who officially obeys it. When the clergyman reads the Burial Service over a suicide, in obedience to one of those mischievous sentimental verdicts which in the teeth of evidence and common sense certify that the criminal act was committed while of unsound mind, is he justly held responsible for the misuse of the Burial Service? Or, when he ministers the Holy Communion to persons whom he knows, or believes that he knows, to be infidels, or morally unfit, albeit, neither scandalous nor by any legal title disqualified for Communion, is it a fair or a just thing to hold the clergyman personally responsible for the profanation of the Sacrament? Why, then, is he to be regarded as "a contributory party" to what he believes to be an incestuous union because he merely carries out the official requirements as to banns, &c.? Is he *particeps criminis* because he enters in his register the names of the parties married under sanction of the law in the parish church? I cannot accept the validity of such reasoning, and must conclude that my clear duty is to place no obstacle in the way of parishioners who desire the use of the parish church for marriage under the new Act.

V. Of the Requirements of Justice and Charity.

My Lord Archbishop, I submit to you that it is a sound rule of Christian morals never to isolate one demand of Christian obligation from the rest, but to have the broad requirement of discipleship as a whole in one's view, when a decision has to be reached on any particular point of conduct. It must, indeed, be assumed that Christian Morality is homogeneous, so that one part of it will not involve the contradiction of any other. Purity will not clash with justice, nor justice with charity. Now that this is so within the sphere of essential morals is a postulate of my thinking; but outside that sphere, in the large debatable territory of the expedient and the permissible, such harmony cannot be assumed. The Christian claim will have to be analyzed into a series of obligations graduated in an order of authority, and the final decision may well have the aspect of a conflict between one apparent duty and another. In this matter of the new Marriage Act, we have a situation created in which the Christian Law is not quite so obvious as many people are disposed to think. To marry a deceased wife's sister is not a breach of the moral law; at worst it is a highly inexpedient action: even the latter description may well have become excessive now that such marriage has been legalized, for the inexpediency was very largely built on the circumstance that marriage with a deceased

wife's sister, although not immoral, was illegal. On the gravest estimate, however, such a union is no more than an inexpedient action. But will your Grace, or any other learned or thoughtful moralist, maintain that inexpedient action is to be treated with the extreme severity which is due to action that is immoral? Yet, what else are you counselling when you advise the clergy to refuse all religious recognition of marriages under the new Act? If the marriages are morally permissible as well as legal, why should the blessing of the Church be refused to those who seek it? And if their marriage may not be blessed by the Church, how can they themselves be received as communicants at the Altars of the Church? And if, as logically is inevitable, they be rejected from Holy Communion, how can we demonstrate the justice, and the charity, of treating as immoral in that deadly sense which excludes from Christian fellowship those whom we perforce admit to have violated no law of God? And how will our whole procedure facilitate that "smooth working" of the Act which your Grace publicly pledged yourself to promote?

For myself, I cannot reconcile the course to which your Grace would urge me with that justice and charity which the Gospel insists upon. To place an undeserved stigma of religious condemnation on a marriage which the laws of England permit and the laws of God do not prohibit, appears to me a heinous and quite inexcusable departure from the morality of the Gospel. This is matter of conscience with

me, and neither your Grace nor any other authority can relieve me of my obligation. The Law of Christian Charity is, to my reading, more certain and unambiguous in the recorded teachings of the Divine Founder of the Christian Church than His sanction of the harsh doctrine of the 99th Canon. To my thinking, if I may introduce a reference to a subject with respect to which the action of the Episcopate has greatly impressed me, "peaceful picketing" is much more plainly a breach of the Law of Love than marriage with a deceased wife's sister is a breach of the Law of Purity. It is true that there is no canon on the subject, and that the general temper of the canons with their refrain of excommunication much better matches the morality of a political faction than that of the Christian society. Be this as it may, if I agree to refuse Christian sanctions to those who marry under the new Act, I could only do so because I conceive myself bound to think with the 99th Canon that their union was incestuous, and if I thought *that*, I should feel myself clearly bound to reject them from Holy Communion as "open and notorious evil livers." I do not propose to do the last, and therefore I shall decline to do the first. St. Margaret's, Westminster, will continue in the future as in the past—so long as its present Rector holds office—to be available for the celebration of Marriages legally contracted and duly secured by all legal conditions of Banns, License, &c.

VI.—Some Concluding Observations.

My Lord Archbishop, it is my happiness to live at the very centre of the national life; on every hand I am reminded of the intimacy which, from the dawn of our history, the Church of England has maintained with the State. It is the frequent and pleasant task of a Canon of Westminster to act as guide to parties of artizans and school children visiting the Abbey. Among the duties of my position I have ever assigned a high place to this easy means of teaching. At one point in the view of Westminster Abbey the union of Church and State is brought home with singular and arresting power. In the eastern walk of the cloister is the beautiful chapter-house, into which the visitor passes under a once-glorious porch, which now, alas! is disfigured almost beyond recognition by the rapid and ruthless action of the smoke-charged atmosphere of London. Within the chapter-house a constable has taken the place of the verger. Why? The answer is extraordinarily interesting and suggestive. In that chapter-house once met the Parliament of England. When the House of Commons was taking shape it lived literally under the protecting roof of the great Abbey, on whose walls the shield of Simon de Montfort still holds a place. The State has retained its possession of the scene of its early activity, and remains custodian of its ancient Parliament house. The closeness of the union between Church and State could not be more

suggestively attested. But there is more in the witness of that vacant and unused chapter-house guarded by the officer of the State. As the reflecting visitor contrasts the great Palace of Westminster with the monastic building which once preceded it as the meeting-place of the English Parliament, a sense of the immense transposition which has taken place in Church and State grows on his mind. The relative situations are in a manner reversed. The State is no more the docile dependent on the Church; rather the Church is the servant of the State.

And what is the service which the Church is called to render to the State? What is the Church thus charged with service? No longer as in former times can the Church be identified with a numerous clerical caste, international, privileged, wealthy, so powerful as to be able to play the mighty Mother to the nations. The weapons of her warfare cannot be any more the material weapons, for such in truth they were, of interdict and deposition and anathema. She is the guardian of an Ideal born from above into the hearts of men, the Angel of another Presence than that harsh and hasting world-spirit, which has men in its grasp from cradle to grave. Behind the Church is the power of whatsoever moral effort is proceeding in the nation. All good men are her members; in realizing their membership they find the meaning and the sanctions of their own best hopes. The organized system of the National Church is symbolic of the persistent, indefinable, unconscious or half-conscious movement of men towards God. The summary of the Church's claim on the national

attention is that word of the Apostle, "We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord: and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." Every separate claim, which stands not in clear and necessary connection with the Divine Business for which alone an organized Church exists, is an act of spiritual treason. Men speak of the "rights" of the Church, of "the law of the Church," of the authority of the Church; and when they are asked to explain their meaning, they are found to have forgotten what indeed the Church is, and what is her incommunicable task in the world. The holy Catholic Church itself is but the Instrument for building up on earth the Kingdom of God, the supremacy of Righteousness in human society. Every particular branch of that Church has the same character within a narrow sphere, and under special conditions. A National Church is as the rest, save for two circumstances. It has its system rooted in the national history, and finds the normal instrument of its self-expression in the national life. Thus a National Church is at once both the most natural and the most tolerant of all Churches. It is the first because it is what it is by virtue of the long shaping processes of the national past: every phase of the national experience is impressed on its system; and it wields over men the mysterious influence which belongs to the immemorial, the inherited, and the unquestioned. It is the last because it may not by the very law of its being become sectional, or limited. It lies open to all the varied elements of the national life, and is not hidebound within the limits of denominational interests. It accepts as the organ of

its self-government nothing less august and authoritative than the national Legislature itself. Only one circumstance can properly destroy a National Church, and that is the definite abandonment of Christian Standards and Ideals by the Nation. If I were persuaded that the English people were ceasing to be Christian in conscious intention and moral tendency, I should agree with those who assert that the day of the Church of England is over. But in spite of appearances, I am not so persuaded. There are many reasons for believing that, at no previous stage of the national history, was there so general a diffusion of Christian ideas, or so many persons, in every department of the public life of the country, who are consciously labouring to bring Christianity into social arrangements. I do certainly observe an increasing scepticism as to the fidelity of clerical organizations to their professed ideal; and so far as the National Church is identified with the clergy, I cannot deny that the public attitude is more unfriendly than was once the case. But when I ask myself for the explanation of the change, I can see such sufficient cause in the self-asserting policy of the clergy themselves, that I find myself under no necessity of drawing the melancholy conclusion, which otherwise might seem irresistible. In this identification of clerical interests with Christianity I perceive the most formidable danger to the National Church. It is the spirit of denominational self-assertion which appears to me to determine the attitude of those who are now emphasizing the conflict between the Statute and the Canon Law,

denouncing the one as irreligious, and exalting the latter as morally binding. I submit to your Grace that our evident duty is, first, to seek an answer to the question of fundamental morals, and next, to build our action as a National Church on the answer we have received.

I am, my Lord Archbishop,

Your Grace's faithful and dutiful servant,

H. HENSLEY HENSON.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY,
September 9th, 1907.

PART II

VIII

CHRISTIANITY IN POLITICS[1]

When I was honoured by the Principal's invitation to lecture to the members of this University, I was in some doubt as to the subject on which I might possibly engage their attention for an hour without inflicting on myself deserved discredit, or on my hearers unmerited fatigue. In choosing the subject which I have (not altogether happily) described as "Christianity in Politics," I was influenced by two considerations, which must serve as my apology (if one be needed) for the course I have adopted. On the one hand, I supposed that a Lecture which was to be delivered on Sunday would naturally treat of some subject lying near to those supreme and solemn interests, which are the staple of thought and conversation in every Christian society on that day. On the other hand, many circumstances, which you will not need that I should instance, had recently directed

[1] Being the "Murtle Lecture" delivered in the Great Hall of Marischal College, Aberdeen, on Sunday afternoon, October 29th, 1905.

attention to the actual influence of the Christian religion on the life of human society. The subject is vast, complicated, confused by many conflicting prejudices, obscured by an intricate interlacement of forces. Some limitation of it was indispensable, and I have elected to limit myself to the influence of Christianity on the course of political development. What contribution has the Gospel made to political science? What effect on political institutions can be traced to Christian causes? What have been the methods by which the theory and practice of the State have been determined by Christian influences? Such are the questions which have been running in my mind, and I shall hope in the course of my discussion, not indeed to answer them, which, in so brief a time and by so slight a method, were altogether impossible, but to indicate the direction in which the answers must be sought, and the nature of the answers which will probably be found.

We may conveniently distinguish six channels through which the religion of Christ has affected the course of political development. I will set them down in their historic importance, only premising that none has ever existed in isolation, that commonly all have co-existed, though in varying degrees of prominence.

I. Influence of Christianity on Individuals.

II. Influence of Ecclesiastical Models on Political Organization.

III. Influence of Christian Ideas on Political Action.

IV. Influence of Christian Controversy on Political Theory.

V. Influence of Christian Persecution on the Balance of Political Power.

VI. Influence of the Sacred Literature of Christianity on Political Doctrine and Practice.

Let me, before proceeding to discuss these instruments or channels of historical influence separately, disarm criticism by the frank confession that the list is not offered as either exact or complete, but only as a convenient frame on which to hang such observations as I shall take leave to submit to you in this Lecture, and let me repeat again that it is not suggested that any one of these organs of Christian influence, which I have distinguished for the sake of convenience, can really be severed from the rest, but only that, in the successive stages of the history of Christendom, now one and now another has seemed to have greater importance.

I. Influence of Christianity on Individuals.

I place in the forefront the Christian method *par excellence*, the influence exerted on the course of politics by individual Christians—influence which can be directly connected with the fact that they were Christians, and which may therefore justly be set down to the credit or, if the fact be so, the discredit of the Christian religion. In all ages, and under all circumstances, this method has been in exercise, and of course it is wholly impossible to estimate its effects or to trace its application, but there are reasons why

it may be said that, in the earlier ages, individual Christians counted for more than in later times. Despotism such as that administered by the Roman Emperors, and barbarism such as that of the Teutonic Kings, vested immense powers in the individual. The whole force of the State was thrown into the scale of the faith of Christ when Constantine professed himself a believer in Christianity; and however much we may deduct from his influence on other grounds, yet it does not admit of doubt that the course of his political action was affected, mainly for good, by the circumstance that he was compelled to take account of Christian public opinion. The legislation of the Christian emperors was certainly coloured in many directions by Christian morality, and (although an exception must be made in respect of the repressive measures adopted after an interval against heretics and non-Christians) yet I think the impartial student of the history of the empire will not dispute that in the main the influence of Christianity on the criminal code was good, and that a humaner spirit was carried into the laws and their administration.

It may, indeed, be objected that, whatever effects for good Christianity may have had in raising and humanizing the imperial system were more than counterbalanced by the weakness which it inflicted on the system itself by its incessant controversies, its contempt for civic duty, its absorption in ascetic disciplines, which were equally hostile to family and to public interests, in a word, its other-worldliness. This may be supposed to be the view of Gibbon, and as Gibbon dictates by an indisputable right the

general opinion of educated Englishmen, it may be concluded that this is the common view.

> "If," he writes, "the decline of the Roman empire was hastened by the conversion of Constantine, his victorious religion broke the violence of the fall, and mollified the ferocious temper of the conquerors."[1]

It is, however, the case that the general effect of the conversion on the stability of the Empire is now somewhat differently estimated by the students of the history, and we may, I think, dismiss as unproved the statement that Christianity "hastened" the fall of Rome.

Gibbon, however, is clearly right when he says that "the pure and genuine influence of Christianity may be traced in its beneficial, though imperfect, effects on the barbarian proselytes of the North." I will illustrate the point with two familiar examples. Can it be doubted that the Christianity of Charlemagne, curiously defective as in many respects it was, affected the political fortunes of Europe powerfully and beneficently? The circumstances in which the Empire of the West had been revived in his person stamped on his government a religious and ecclesiastical character, and bound him to employ, as the instrument of the grand civilizing projects which he conceived, that hierarchical system which was the legacy of the older empire, and contained resources of coherence and energy adequate, when placed frankly at his disposal, to lay the enduring foundations of Western civilization. Charlemagne was canonized some centuries after his death at the

[1] *v. Decline and Fall*, vol. IV., p. 163, ed. Bury.

instance of Frederic Barbarossa, and there was perhaps a deeper fitness in the proceeding than, at the time, was perceived. For if it be the case that Western civilization has taken historic shape as Christendom, we must acknowledge that to the great Frankish emperor more than to any other individual the fact is due. The "Holy Roman Empire," with all that the significant phrase conveys to the student of European history, was, in a very real sense, the creation of Charlemagne. Take the still more impressive example of our English Alfred. In him the religion of Christ found a truly admirable instrument for directing the political course of a critical epoch. The enthusiastic language of the late Professor Freeman will not seem excessive to a student of the period :—

> "No man recorded in history seems ever to have united so many great and good qualities : at once captain, lawgiver, saint, and scholar, he devoted himself with a single mind to the welfare of his people in every way. He showed himself alike their deliverer, their ruler, and their teacher. He came to the crown at a moment of extreme national danger ; a great part of his reign was taken up with warfare with an enemy who threatened the national being ; yet he found means personally to do more for the general enlightenment of his people than any other king in English history."

We may add the same historian's summary of the effects of Alfred's achievements :—

> "When the Scandinavian invasions threatened the utter overthrow of England, and especially of English Christianity, he saved his own kingdom from the general wreck, and made it the centre for the deliverance and union of the whole country. The Danish invasions did more than

any other one cause to bring about the unity of England, but that they did so was only because Alfred was able to use them to that end."[1]

It may be objected that such men as Charlemague and Alfred would have worked wondrously whatever religion they professed; and so much may be conceded without risk to my argument. Suppose that the fortunes of battle had fallen otherwise on the famous field of Tours, where Charles Martel arrested and rolled back the tide of Saracen conquest, which threatened to bring all Europe under the dominion of the Arabian Prophet, and that, as an inevitable consequence, Charlemagne and Alfred had had to utter their personal witness through the media provided for them by Mohammedan faith, Mohammedan literature, and Mohammedan political models. Can it be doubted that the influence of those great individuals would have been different and vastly less beneficent? The Koran is a very inferior manual of political science to the Bible, and the example of Mohammed is not to be named in the same category with the example of Jesus Christ. Christianity brought the accumulated wisdom and culture of the Roman empire, which its catholic genius enabled it to appropriate, consecrate, and commission; Mohammedanism had nothing to bring but the futile legends of Arabia and the miserable precedents of destructive conquest. I am not labouring an unreal argument when I ask you to recognize, in the influence of Christianity on individuals, one, and that the most potent and persistent, of the

[1] *v. Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, vol. I., p. 153 f.

methods by which the course of human politics has been affected, and that mainly for good, by the Religion of Christ.

II. Influence of Ecclesiastical Models on Political Organization.

I approach this part of my subject with considerable hesitation, for it cannot be doubted that Christianity has often seemed rather a patient than an active factor in the world's life, receiving impressions rather than making them. Especially is this the case within the sphere of ecclesiastical politics. It would, I think, be possible to show that the organization of the Christian Church has been determined from the first by secular models. Episcopacy took shape as a Christian adaptation of arrangements actually existing in the Græco-Roman world, and when the empire became Christian, the metropolitanates and patriarchates seem to have followed existing political divisions.[1] The Teutonic diocese was the tribal kingdom. "Cujus est regio ejus religio" was no creation of the sixteenth century, though, under the distinctive conditions of the German empire, it received a special application. I have had occasion elsewhere to point out how the disciplinary procedure of the Christian Church was influenced by con-

[1] Principal Lindsay in his admirable book, *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1902, shows cause for thinking that the ecclesiastical system was largely conformed to the "great pagan hierarchy" of Cæsar-worship, v., ch. viii. The association of Church and State in the pagan society was so intimate that it is hard to distinguish what influence is properly to be ascribed to the one and what to the other.

temporary secular models.[1] The "Penitentials" of the Middle Ages are best explained as an adaptation of the Teutonic fashion of reckoning the gravity of crimes in money values. The "Canon Law" took shape as an ecclesiastical copy of the Civil Law of Rome. "Casuistry" and "Probabilism" appear to me to be most intelligible as adaptations of legal methods and theories to moral discipline. In all this I am far from seeing anything unworthy of Christianity. On the contrary, I incline to recognize this singular power of appropriating the secular to the service of the spiritual as a feature eminently congruous with the claim of Christ's religion to be truly the religion of humanity. The Church is always vigilant to discover in the society, which it aspires to conquer for Christ, methods which may be adapted to the purposes of its mission, just as an astute general, waging war with barbarians, finds their characteristic modes of warfare eminently serviceable. Pedantic rigidity is the evidence, not of military skill, but of its absence: to be quick to learn is to hold the secret of victory. So in the historic warfare which the Church of Christ wages in the world. The elasticity of its system discovers the wisdom which guides its course. While then I am fully conscious of the impression made by the secular on the ecclesiastical development, I think it can be shown that the process was sometimes reversed, and the political formed itself on the ecclesiastical. Let me offer a few examples.

[1] *v. Moral Discipline in the Christian Church.* Longmans. 1905. *v.* Lecture III.

(1) The unification of Anglo-Saxon England was facilitated, if we may not say effected, by the organization of the Anglo-Saxon Church. "The conversion of the heptarchic kingdoms," says Bishop Stubbs,

> "not only revealed to Europe and Christendom the existence of a new nation, but may be said to have rendered the new nation conscious of its unity in a way which, under the influence of heathenism, community of language and custom had failed to do so. . . . The Church formed a basis of national union. . . . The unity of the Church in England was the pattern of the unity of the State: the cohesion of the Church was for ages the substitute for the cohesion which the divided nation was unable otherwise to realize. . . . Englishmen were in their lay aspect Mercians or West Saxons; only in their ecclesiastical relations could they feel themselves fellow-countrymen and fellow-subjects. . . . The unity of the Church was in the early period the only working unity; and its liberty, in the evil days that followed, the only form in which the traditions of the ancient freedom lingered. It was again to be the tie between the conquered and the conquerors; to give to the oppressed a hold on the conscience of the despot; to win new liberties and revive the old; to unite Norman and Englishman in the resistance to tyrants, and educate the growing nation for its distant destiny as the teacher and herald of freedom to all the world."[1]

I think it must be allowed that Christianity wielded a great and beneficent influence on the political development of the English people in the early Middle Ages.

(2) The development of representative institutions may, I think, with much probability be shown to have been affected by the practice of the Church, which offered to the State in its immemorial system

[1] *v. Constitutional History*, ch. VIII.

of Councils a model of assemblies which were deliberative and in a true measure representative. It is not without real significance that the traditional founder of the House of Commons, Simon de Montfort, was known to his contemporaries as an enthusiastic Churchman.

> "Piety and culture," writes Miss Kate Norgate, "were the characteristics of Simon's home. He knew all the morning and night Offices of the Church by heart, and went through them almost as regularly as a priest, spending more of the night in devotion than in sleep."[1]

The practice of demanding grants of money from the clergy had originated a custom of "assembling the clergy in distinct assemblies for secular business, which" (as Bishop Stubbs has pointed out) "largely influenced the history of both Parliament and Convocation."

> "It was by action on these occasions that the clerical estate worked out its distinct organization as an estate of the realm, asserting and possessing deliberative, legislative, and taxing powers, and in so doing provided some not unimportant precedents for Parliamentary action under like circumstances."[2]

In a very striking and characteristic passage Bishop Stubbs describes the place which Westminster has held in the development of that constitutional government which is the glorious heritage of the English-speaking race, and its most distinctive contribution to the welfare of civilized mankind. He points out the significance of the remarkable grouping of buildings which made Westminster the centre of English

[1] *v. Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, vol. XXXVIII,, p. 294.
[2] *v. Constitutional History*, vol. II., pp. 175-6.

political life. Here I content myself with offering for your consideration the undoubtedly suggestive circumstance that the Parliament of Simon de Montfort assembled in the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey, and that in consequence the Chapter House remained "the ancient and accustomed house" of the Commons, until at the Reformation it was replaced by the historic Chapel of St. Stephen. I believe it would be possible to show that the true origin of many of the details of our political system, as for instance vote by ballot, is to be traced to the older system of the mediæval Church. But I have much to say, and I must not linger at greater length over this part of my subject. But I should be guilty of an indefensible omission if, speaking in Scotland at a famous centre of Scottish history both civil and ecclesiastical, I were not to make some reference to the profound, salutary, and enduring influence which the Church of Scotland has, since the Reformation, exercised on the political education of the Scottish nation. It is, I believe, quite impossible to overvalue the political advantage which Scotland has derived from the fact that, in the worst times of tyranny, when the nation was really menaced with the loss of its hardly-won liberties as well civil as religious, there was found in the National Church an organization strong enough and democratic enough to rally, exercise, stimulate, and commission the sterling hereditary qualities of the imperilled race. The astonishing importance of the part now being played by Scotchmen in the administration of the British Empire—a part altogether out of proportion to their

number or their national wealth—indicates the exceptional vigour, moral and intellectual, of the people as a whole, and that vigour is, I apprehend, the result of a strenuous history in which the principal educating and disciplining influence has been that of the National Church.[1]

III. The Influence of Christian Ideas on Political Action.

Here again I am very conscious of the disadvantages of my arrangement of material, for almost everything which can be said on my subject might be fitly said under this heading. Individuals are influenced by ideas, and their influence is only Christian in so far as it can be recognized as expressing effectively Christian ideas. Institutions are only justly regarded as Christian in so far as they can be shown to embody Christian ideas. Indeed, it is a fair question whether there can truly be said to be any Christian institutions at all in any other sense, for, if we limit the term "Christian" to that which can certainly be ascribed to the Divine Founder of Christianity, it is arguable that none of the existing institutions of Christendom can properly claim the description. On this view the Christianity of Christian institutions will be strictly contingent on

[1] I would call attention to Prof. Pollard's essay on "Church and State in England and Scotland," in the recently-published volume called *Factors in Modern History*. London, 1907.

their ability to express Christian ideas. Thus it will be the case that institutions claiming to be Christian may actually represent rather the negation of Christian ideas than the ideas themselves. The inquisition or the confessional, to take notorious examples, may conceivably be found, if closely examined, to have no place in any account of Christianity, and the monstrous evils, direct and indirect, which can be traced to them ought, perhaps, in strict justice to be struck out of the reckoning when a serious attempt is made to appraise the actual influence of Christ's religion on the life of humanity. Indeed, it may be argued that all the good effects of Christianity are to be traced to its original ideas, and that all those effects which are doubtful or mischievous are clearly traceable to the institutions which, from time to time, have been charged with the task of expressing those ideas, and have accordingly carried among men the name and character of Christian. I have always thought it profoundly significant that our Lord, in advance of Christian history, appears to have contemplated large, and even total, depravations of His Gospel. You will remember the words of the Sermon on the Mount: "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men."

Ideas, however, may express themselves apart from institutions, and the Christian ideas have certainly done so. It is possible to indicate very important political movements which must be ascribed to ideas

which cannot be separated from their ultimate historic source in the Gospel.

I will take four ideas, which will be recognized universally as Christian, by which, remember, I do not mean necessarily that they are exclusively Christian, but only that, whether or not they can be found elsewhere, they are integral to the Christian revelation. These are the ideas respectively of equality, of responsibility, of inherent human rights, and of social progress. I am conscious that my phrasing is open to fair objection as too loose to be exact and too general to be precise, but I shall hope to make myself sufficiently intelligible as I proceed.

(1) The idea of equality is implied in the Christian doctrines of the Fatherhood of God and of the gift of the Holy Spirit to all believers. "There is no respect of persons" is an obvious inference from the teaching of Christ. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that, on the first preaching of the Gospel, there was made an attempt to establish a communistic society. "One is your teacher," Christ had said, "and all ye are brethren." The practical expression of this fraternity was sought in a communistic ordering of social life.

What a charming picture it is that the sacred historian has drawn!

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that ought of the things which he possessed was his own: but they had all things common .... For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and

brought the price of the things that were sold, and laid them at the Apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need."

We need not stop to inquire whether this fair picture is a record of historic fact, or rather an idealized version of the primitive Christian society, offered by way of silent protest to an age which had already receded far from primitive fraternity. The point is that the sacred writer describes what has been perennial in Christendom. This idea of equality has inspired great political movements, mingling itself, of course, inevitably, as is the case whenever any idea begins to move men to action, with many other aspirations, and with many interests and resentments often remote enough from itself, but always giving distinctive colour to the movements which it originates. Take the monastic movement, or if that be thought to lie somewhat apart from politics, take the Lollardism of the fourteenth century and the great peasant revolt which it did much to cause, and the great peasant wars of the next ages, which stand in direct lineal succession to the Wycliffite teaching. I may serve myself of some remarks of Mr. George Trevelyan in his excellent account of the peasants' rising of 1381, a book which was, I believe, the firstfruits of historical studies which promise to be exceptionally fruitful of result. I ought to say that he is emphasizing the idea of freedom rather than the idea of equality, but he admits that both had their place in the genesis of the insurrection:—

> "We have already set out the economic and social conditions of the rising. It remains to indicate the ideas

> by which it was inspired. In that age revolutionary theories were as naturally religious as in the eighteenth century they were naturally irreligious. And so, in fact, we find. The idea of personal freedom was brought forcibly before the peasant by the rapid commutation of predial service for economic reasons; and but for this occurrence it might, for all we can tell, have slumbered yet another century. But this idea once awakened was at once discovered to be in accordance with the teaching of Christianity. Complete slavery had long been opposed by the Church, but the Abbots and Bishops who held manors all over the country had not yet seen any incompatibility between Christian brotherhood and the status of the villein. But the peasantry and their humbler religious pastors saw it for themselves. Besides the levelling and democratic tendencies of the Christian spirit, the belief in a common origin from Adam and Eve, not then shaken or allegorized by scientific criticism, was a very real and valid argument against hereditary serfdom. Indeed, it is hard to see how the lords, basing their claims on inheritance only, and not on general utility, could logically escape the difficulty. At any rate, the famous catchword,
>
> When Adam delved and Eve span
> Who was then a gentleman?
>
> seems to have corresponded in importance and popularity to 'Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité.'"[1]

Much the same might be said with respect to the peasants' rising in Germany 150 years later. The Twelve Articles put forward in 1525 were accepted practically throughout Germany as the basis of the Revolution. They are printed in the history of the peasants' war published a few years since by Mr. Belfort Bax. The Articles are in great part a mosaic of Biblical phrases, and it is impossible to mistake the evidence they provide of the political influence exerted by the ideas released into publicity by the

[1] *v. The Peasants' Rising of* 1381, pp. 195–6.

Lutheran movement. It will be sufficient for our present purpose to quote the Third Article :—

> "Thirdly, the custom hath been hitherto that we have been held for villeins ; which is to be deplored, since Christ hath purchased and redeemed us all with His precious blood, the poor hind as well as the highest, none excepted. Therefore do we find in the Scripture that we are free ; and we will be free. Not that we would be wholly free as having no authority over us, for this God doth not teach us. We shall live in obedience, and not in the freedom of our fleshy pride ; shall love God as our Lord ; shall esteem our neighbours as brothers ; and do to them as we would have them do to us, as God hath commanded at the Last Supper. Therefore shall we live according to His ordinance. This ordinance in no wise showeth us that we should not obey authority. Not alone should we humble ourselves before authority, but before every man as we are also gladly obedient in all just and Christian matters to such authority as is elected and set over us, so it be by God set over us. We are also in no doubt but that ye will as true and just Christians relieve us from villeinage, or will show us, out of the Gospel, that we are villeins."[1]

It is not necessary, nor have I the time, to multiply examples from the seventeenth century and still later times. I apprehend that none will question the affiliation of the doctrines of the "social contract" to the gospel of fraternity in Christ. No doubt Rousseau, in common with his contemporaries, imagined himself to be the faithful exponent of the classical republicanism about which they spoke so often, and which they misunderstood so completely, but the tone of fraternal emotion which more than anything else, perhaps, gave to his writings their amazing popular influence was derived from the New

[1] *v. The Peasants' Rising*, p. 68.

Testament. As in the case of Tolstoi to-day, the spirit of the most fantastic political proposals is genuinely and apparently evangelical. And it is this fact that gives to their work its charm and its value.

(2) The idea of responsibility is implied in the Christian doctrines of service and of future judgment. If you study the ritual and ceremonial of a Coronation you will be at once impressed by the solemn emphasis with which the responsibilities of kinship are asserted. At every point in the service the Monarch is confronted with the Almighty author of his power. Take as a sufficient example the prayer which the Tsar of Russia offers immediately after he has received his crown. I am quoting from the late Bishop Creighton's fascinating account of the present Tsar's Coronation, of which you will remember the Bishop was a spectator:—

> "The bells and cannon ceased, and there was profound stillness as the Emperor knelt, and in clear earnest voice prayed for himself: "Lord God of our father, and King of Kings, Who hast created all things by Thy Word, and by Thy wisdom hast made man, that he should walk uprightly and rule righteously over Thy world, Thou hast chosen me as Tsar and judge over Thy people. I acknowledge Thy unsearchable purpose towards me, and bow in thankfulness before Thy Majesty. Do Thou, my Lord and Governor, fit me for the work to which Thou hast sent me: teach me and guide me in this great service. May there be with me the wisdom which belongs to Thy throne; send it from Thy holy heaven, that I may know what is well pleasing in Thy sight, and what is right according to Thy commandment. May my heart be in Thine Hand, to accomplish all that is to the profit of the people committed to my charge, and to Thy glory, that so in the day of Thy judgment I

may give Thee account of my stewardship without blame; through the grace and mercy of Thy Son, Who was once crucified for us, to Whom be all honour and glory with Thee and the Holy Ghost, the Giver of Life, for ever and ever. Amen."[1]

It is, perhaps, impossible for us to realize a condition of opinion in which power was really to a very great extent divorced from responsibility; yet that is the case in barbarous communities, and in communities which, though civilized, are still politically barbarous. Christianity moralized government by carrying into men's minds the conviction of responsibility. It is a shallow reading of history to see with Gibbon in such action as that of St. Ambrose, when he put to public penance the Emperor Theodosius for his atrocious massacre at Thessalonica in A.D. 390, nothing but ecclesiastical astuteness and ambition. The Church was truly serving the interests of mankind when it brought home to the despots of the world, in the only way possible, the lesson of responsibility. Power has passed from monarchs to peoples, and the task of teaching this indispensable lesson has now to be renewed under strangely altered conditions. But will any doubt that the vital interests of mankind hang upon the competence of the peoples to learn it? I may be forgiven if I venture to believe that the Church of Christ must still be the teacher, though in modes wonderfully different.

(3) The idea of manhood as intrinsically sacred is implied in the doctrine of the Incarnation. Can it

[1] *Historical Essays and Reviews*, pp. 319–320.

be denied that this idea has played a great part in the process by which slavery, and every approximation to slavery, have been finally discredited in the judgment of civilized Europeans? It cannot be denied, indeed, that the Apostles never denounced or disallowed slavery; they accepted the existing organization of society as adequate for the only object of their teaching, viz., the persuading men to live as disciples of Christ. This point was insisted upon by the religious apologists of American slavery in the embittered controversy which preceded the Civil War. Francis Newman somewhere satirically suggests that the slave-owners might fitly have erected a statue to Onesimus in every city throughout the slave-holding States in recognition of the services which he had done to their cause.

Even if we should admit that, in pure theory, there is no necessary incompatibility between Christianity and slavery as a specific mode of organizing human society, we should not have advanced one inch towards justifying the slave systems of history. The intrinsic sanctity of human nature, which is a postulate of the religion of the Incarnation, is absolutely incompatible with the treatment of human beings as chattels, and inasmuch as every form of slavery known to human experience has proceeded on the contrary hypothesis, we cannot scruple to say broadly that slavery is not reconcilable with the profession of Christianity. If, therefore, we are asked what has been the attitude of Christianity towards slavery, I think we must answer that slavery is inconsistent with the fundamental ideas of the Gospel, that, in proportion as those ideas have

entered into human life, slavery has perished. If we be challenged with the acquiescence of the Apostle and the conflicting precedents of ecclesiastical history, we can but answer that the ideas of the Gospel have reached men through agencies which themselves are time-born and time-bound, and that it argues an inversion of the true order of discussion to read the ideas in the light of the institutions and not the institutions in the light of the ideas. It has been objected against the New Testament that, while the religious equality of men is asserted, their natural rights as men are ignored. M. Paul Janet, for example, takes this view, and explains thus the undoubted fact that, "we see slavery, although mitigated in practice, yet accepted in theory by the Scholastic Divines, defended in the seventeenth century by Bossuet, and even at the present time (1887) existing in Christian nations with the sanction of Christian teachers."[1]

I think this criticism ignores the fact that the highest conceivable doctrine of inherent human rights is implicit in the faith of the Incarnation. Although, perhaps, lying a little outside my subject, I may be permitted to point out that, from the first, this faith has shown its tendency by effecting a great reformation in the treatment of men by those who, in the hierarchies of ordered life, are their superiors. The factory legislation of our own time stands in direct succession to the humane provisions of the Anglo-Saxon codes, which often included a reference to the Incarnation, as providing the reason for legislation.

[1] *v. Histoire de la Science Politique*, pp. 303-334, vol. I.

(4) The idea of social progress was inherent in the Christian Doctrine of the Kingdom of God. The inspiration of the long efforts of the mediæval Papacy was precisely this idea, understood narrowly and grossly, but still a force of moral progress, the highest and most widely beneficent of the energies which fashioned the civilization of the West. The outstanding figure who embodies this purpose of the mediæval Papacy is the famous Hildebrand, who in 1073 ascended the Apostolic throne as Pope Gregory VII.

> "One predominating idea inspired him," observes Neander, "and to this he sacrificed all other interests; the idea of the independence of the Church, and of the control to be exercised by her over all other human relations; the idea of a religious moral dominion over the world to be administered by the Papacy. This was not, indeed, the purely Christian idea of dominion over the world, but a recasting of it under an Old Testament form altogether foreign to Christianity; and that, too, not without some mixture of the idea of Rome's ancient imperial sovereignty."[1]

No doubt this was the case. There is as much historic insight as literary point in the famous description of the Papacy as "the ghost of the Roman Empire sitting crowned on the tomb thereof." The recent historical researches of the most brilliant of the younger generation of English-speaking historians—I mean, of course, Professor Bury—all tend to magnify the influence of the Roman Empire on the development of the Teutonic world. But when all allowances are made, it remains the case that the ultimate source

[1] *v. General Church History*, Vol. VII., p. 111.

of that mighty effort of the mediæval popes to establish a visible Kingdom of Christ, ruling by Divine authority, and bringing under the dominion of righteousness all the powers of the world, was the teaching of Jesus Christ Himself. This fact explains, and alone can explain, the undoubted fact that the best men of the time were carried away by the papal venture, and that from Gregory VII. to Innocent III., that is, throughout the twelfth century, and, though with less unanimity, throughout the thirteenth, the popes were supported by the general conscience of the Church. Perhaps we shall not err if we attribute to the same cause—I mean the Christian idea of a Kingdom of God, destined finally to be set up on earth—the Crusades, which fill so great a space in the record of the Middle Ages, and which, the more they are studied, are seen to have exercised a wide-reaching effect on the course of political development.

It has been, however, within more recent times that the political potencies of this idea have become most evident.

The dream of the monastic founders and pontiffs of the Middle Ages has returned to men in the Socialistic vision of a society re-ordered on a basis of equal rights, free from the monstrous and well-nigh intolerable contrasts which alarm and threaten the industrial individualistic society of modern Europe. Stripped of its extravagances, divorced from its too common association with bald materialism, set free from the scandals of anarchism and profligacy, can it be seriously questioned that Socialism might claim

the support of the Christian teaching?[1] The latest age, in reverting to the practical interpretation of the Gospel of fraternity which commended itself to the first, must be allowed to have large justifications to offer. I observe in all directions an increasing embarrassment in those Christians (of whom I must candidly confess myself to be one) who attempt to demonstrate some tolerable compatibility between society ordered as we know it on an individualistic and industrial basis, and the idea of that Kingdom of righteousness and love and liberty which the Founder of Christianity gave to His Church.

IV. Influence of Controversy on Political Theory.

In proof of this part of my thesis I should appeal particularly to the fourteenth and to the following centuries. The long-continued conflict between the popes of Avignon and the contemporary German sovereigns was intimately associated throughout its course with religious controversies, and the effect of the latter was to contribute to the political conflict an intellectual importance which gives it an epoch-making place in the history of political theory. Louis

[1] I had originally written "can it be seriously questioned that, *in its fundamental postulates*, Socialism can claim the support of Christianity?" But, on reflection, I find myself compelled to re-write the sentence. It is precisely in "the fundamental postulates" of Socialism that I fail to perceive any secure and natural agreement with the first principles of Christianity. The objects which many Socialists have in view may be compatible with, and often have been inspired by, Christianity, but in such cases the description "Socialist" is conventional, not exact.

of Bavaria, exasperated beyond measure by the pontifical policy, entered on a course of reprisals. His court became the centre of anti-papal speculation and writing. It was inevitable, since at that time ecclesiastical and civil affairs were so closely united, that the subject-matter of controversy should extend over both areas. Take, for example, the case of Marsilius of Padua, the ablest of the imperial apologists :—

> "As teacher of theology, philosophy, and medicine at Paris, in A.D. 1324, when the dispute between Emperor and Pope had reached its height, he composed jointly with his colleague, John of Jandun, in Champagne a *Defensor Pacis*, a civil and ecclesiastical memoir, which, with an insight and clearness very remarkable for that age, developed the evangelical mean of the superiority of the State over the Church and of the Empire over the Papacy, historically, exegetically, and dogmatically; and for this end established theories of Scripture and tradition, of the tasks and place of the Church in the State, of excommunication and persecution of heretics, of liberty of faith and conscience, &c., which even transcend the principles laid down on these points by the Reformation of the sixteenth century. . . . In A.D. 1327 John XXII. condemned the *Defensor Pacis*, and Clement VI. pronounced its author the worst heretic of all ages. The book, often reprinted during the sixteenth century, was first printed at Basel in A.D. 1522."[1]

It is not without significance that one of the earliest proceedings of Henry VIII., when he entered on his conflict with the papacy, was to issue an English translation of the "Defensor Pacis," which had a great circulation. It hardly needs that I should elaborate the proof from the period of the Reformation, but I must make a few observations on the political influence, or rather, to speak more exactly,

[1] *v.* Kurtz's *Church History*, vol. II., p. 198.

the political speculations of the Jesuits. I confess to much hesitation in making any reference to a subject so inflammatory, and, therefore, I shall be very brief. A well-informed Roman Catholic writer, Father Taunton, in his interesting "History of the English Jesuits," enables us to see how, from the theological standpoint of the Jesuits, the most alarming political inferences were possible. It does not seem to me extravagant to trace the source of modern Anarchist doctrines of assassination to such teaching as that which Father Taunton shows to have been put forward in Elizabeth's reign by the famous Jesuit Parsons.

Here is a specimen:—

> "The universal school of Catholic theologians and canonists hold (and it is certain and of faith) that any Christian prince who manifestly swerves from the Catholic religion, and wishes to call others from it, falls at once from all power and dignity, both by Divine and human right, and before any sentence be passed against him by the supreme pastor and judge; and the subjects are free from the obligation of any oath of allegiance which they had taken to him as a legitimate prince; they may and should (if they have power) expel from his sovereignty over Christians such a man as an apostate, a heretic, a deserter of Christ the Lord, and an enemy hostile to the State itself, lest he infect others, and withdraw them from the faith by his example and commandment. Now this, the certain, defined, and undoubted opinion of the most learned, is clearly conformable and in agreement with the apostolic doctrine." And he proceeds to quote St. Paul, 1 Cor. VII., concerning the faithful wife who is bound to the unbelieving husband.[1]

Parsons did not stand alone: he was but echoing the doctrines of the Spanish casuists among whom he had lived. "The Spanish theological mind,"

[1] *v. Hist. of the Jesuits in England*, p. 148.

observes Father Taunton, "was of a highly speculative character. It enunciated principles of theology which, when reduced by a logical application to practice, shocked and alarmed the world." Omit the papal theory, which can hardly at any time have been very vigorously held, separate the doctrine from the manifold limitations, which, in an educated mind trained in casuistic methods, mitigated its ferocity, let it be held by a desperate and ignorant artizan, on whom the heavy hand of industrial society has borne heavily, and the Jesuit teaching will emerge as a simple creed of murder. In quoting a Roman Catholic writer, who expresses frankly enough his own disgust at the Jesuit teaching, I have sufficiently shown that I am far from crediting to the Roman Catholic Church as a whole the sentiments of the Jesuits. I observe that Mr. John Morley has traced the dogma of the sovereignty of peoples, which played so great a part in the French Revolution, to the controversies of the Middle Ages.[1]

Perhaps I ought to apologize for including the very indirect political consequences of Christian controversies in the list of Christian influences, but when we remember the great place in the history of Christianity which controversy has held in every age from the first to the last, I do not see how we can fairly exclude it from our reckoning. This defence will extend also to the case of persecution, which has in Christian experience been so closely connected with theological controversy. This is our next head.

[1] *v. Rousseau*, vol. II., p. 144f.

V. Influence of Christian Persecution on the Balance of Political Power,

It is not necessary that I should enter, at this stage of what I fear is rather a long lecture, on the important and humiliating inquiry into the explanations which can be advanced to clear up the strange fact that the religion of love has, in the course of a long history, been more than any other religion the occasion of persecution. The fact cannot be denied, nor its strangeness.

A very eminent Christian scholar was wont to say to his friends that he had come on mature reflection to think that of all individuals who had ever professed Christianity the most widely baleful in influence had been the famous St. Augustine. In truth it is hard to measure the extent of the evils which have flowed from his fatal gift of reasoning and his ardour of controversy. He consecrated slavery to Christian acceptance by connecting with it his sombre doctrine of sin. He inaugurated the long and shameful story of State persecution by his fantastic and even ridiculous exegesis. He gave a direction to religious thinking that, in later ages, created the gloomy perversions of Christianity which, rightly or wrongly, are summed up in the word Calvinism. It is necessary to remember the authoritative patronage under which the great crime of persecution was adopted by the Church as a settled element of its religious method, and the steady official maintenance of persecution throughout Christian history, even to

the precincts of our own age, in order to see at a glance the impossibility of omitting persecution from an estimate of Christian influences. The political consequences of persecution have been very great. Let me offer a few examples.

(1) Take the case of the Templars, whose suppression I once heard Bishop Stubbs describe as "the blackest crime of the Middle Ages." Dr. Döllinger, in concluding his last academical lecture on November 15th, 1889, made some weighty observations on the consequences of that tragedy. The disarming of Cyprus, which had been the headquarters of the order, deprived Europe of a powerful bulwark against the Turks: the abominable treatment of the knights created a precedent of harsh and senseless cruelty, which governed French criminal law up to the Revolution; and the highest sanction in Christendom was given to the popular belief in witchcraft, from which came such a long train of tragedies for centuries. "Were I," concludes the venerable historian, "to select a single day in the whole course of history which in my opinion might most emphatically be described as a *dies nefastus*, it would be none other than October 13th, 1307."[1]

(2) Take the case of John Huss, murdered with infamous cruelty, and in violation of the imperial safe-conduct by the Council of Constance, which holds rank in Christian history as the most numerous assembly of ecclesiastics ever collected together in one

[1] *Historical and Literary Addresses*, pp. 218–219.

place. A few sentences from Bishop Creighton's Ford Lectures will sufficiently point the moral of that bad history :—

> "The Churchmen saw no need for any apologetic excuses to explain away their cruelty, while all Bohemia, except the Clericals, was stirred to a pitch of rage which found its vent in a long and desperate and bloody war against their King, whom they regarded as dishonoured, because he broke his word at the bidding of the Church, and delivered over to the flames the man whom he had pledged himself to shield with all the power of the Empire."[1]

The student of Bohemian history knows how vast a stream of miseries to that country flowed from the Hussite wars, which were precipitated by the action of the Fathers of Constance.

(3) Take the case of the migrations of the persecuted which became frequent in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and even the eighteenth centuries. Dr. Döllinger has well stated the facts :—

> "The particular effect of the religious persecutions of those days upon our own time is still felt in the results of the extensive emigrations and colonizations which they occasioned. Since the migration of the barbarian tribes a thousand years before, nothing like it had occurred. Without dwelling here upon the psychological changes effected in the character of nations, I would emphatically call attention to the great shifting of political vigour and consequently of the balance of power which in course of time made itself felt. The State that expels its subjects makes over to the State that admits them flesh of its flesh and blood of its blood, and that, too, of the healthiest and best type. The men who are ready to sacrifice so much that is dear to us all rather than be forced into lying, deceit, hypocrisy are as a rule better and more useful citizens than

[1] *v. Council of Constance*, p. 186.

those who, for want of courage and energy, submit to the constraint, and wear the mask of an authorized faith. England and the Netherlands were strengthened in this way, and Brandenburg-Prussia thus rose step by step to greater power. French refugees flying before the dragonnades of Louis XIV. were willingly received, and brought manifold advantages to the Margravate of Brandenburg. Then came also Protestants from the Palatinate, Waldenses, Mennonites, all seeking an asylum and liberty for the exercise of their faith. Even in the eighteenth century Salzburgers, compelled by their ecclesiastical princes to emigrate, found a hospitable reception at Brandenburg. In the year 1780 it was calculated that of the three million inhabitants of the Prussian kingdom one million consisted of the descendants of immigrants."[1]

Dr. Döllinger proceeds to give instances of the political ruin effected by persecution. A third of the Bohemian nation migrated after the disastrous battle on the Weissenberg (A.D. 1620), which may be said to have transformed Bohemia from a Protestant to a Catholic country. The total ruin of Poland is directly traceable to the internal dissidence fostered by the Jesuits. It would not be excessive if I added further examples from America and from Ireland. But I have said enough to make my meaning clear, and I must hasten to my last head.

VI. Influence of the Sacred Literature on Political Doctrine and Practice.

Here, again, I crave your indulgence for even seeming to suggest that the influence of the Scriptures can really be isolated from the other modes of influence which the Christian religion has employed.

[1] *v. Historical and Literary Addresses*, p. 239.

The Scriptures have nourished personal Christianity: they have powerfully affected the ecclesiastical organization which from time to time has served as a model on which political systems may be formed: they are the storehouse and treasury of those Christian ideas which have determined political action: they have provided their controversial weapons to the polemical athletes of every age: they have been advanced as the justification of persecutions by all the Churches. It may well seem irrational to set down, under a distinct heading, the influence of the sacred literature. Yet a little reflection will, I hope, justify the course which I have adopted. I might indeed build my case on the characteristic features of the ecclesiastical history of the reformed Churches of England and Scotland. Let anyone trace the influence of the Old Testament on the monarchical doctrine of the Thirty-nine Articles, of the Canons of 1604 and 1640, and of the standard Anglican divines, and let him go on to consider the political consequences of that doctrine, and he will hardly resent my present argument. Similarly in Scotland, the genesis of the famous Covenants, which played so great a part in the critical history of the seventeenth century, is manifest enough, and the student of Scottish history knows how deeply the temper and even the precedents of Israelite history affected the life of the people. The most distinctive of Scottish institutions, regarded from the standpoint of an external observer, was for many generations the Sabbath, and the political student will remember that the Sabbatarian controversy, which gathered

strength from this side of the border, was one of the most potent factors in the revolution which cost one Stuart his head and another his throne. The Sabbath, like the covenant, bears on its face the source from which it came. It was the Old Testament, far more than the New, which affected the political life of the Protestant societies. Indeed the Jewish scriptures seemed to banish the Christian in certain directions. When I was last in Scotland, I was shown by mine host a MS. copy of the session book of the parish of Kiltearn for the years 1698 to 1705. It displayed a detailed attempt to make the Mosaic Law the basis of parochial administration. One entry struck me as curiously suggestive. It recorded the putting to public penance of a parishioner for the offence of "breaking a stalk of corn on the Sabbath day." One might have thought that reminiscences of the Gospel would have arrested the ministers and elders, and held them back from stigmatizing as criminal conduct which could be justified by no less an authority than that of the Founder's words. This, of course, is a comparatively trivial example, but it will serve as well as any other to illustrate the influence of the Old Testament in the parochial system, that is, on the local politics of Scotland. It is not difficult to understand the attractiveness of the Old Testament. The Reformation was, in one and not the least important of its many aspects, an assertion of nationality against an international system. Here in the Old Testament was the picture of a national life, consecrated and Divinely ordered, commended moreover to the serious and

reverent regard of Christians by its character as part of scriptures which were universally held to be the very oracles of God. As against the claims of the mediæval papacy, what weapon could be so effective as the appeal to the precedents of the chosen people, whose whole history was recorded for the admonition and imitation of Christians? Here was nationalism vindicated and elevated to the level of a religious principle. Moreover, in the sixteenth century national sentiment expressed itself everywhere through monarchical institutions. The absoluteness of the King meant at that time, in English usage, the complete independence of his Kingship from external claims of the Holy Roman Pope, or of his rather ghostly comrade the Holy Roman Emperor. Here in the Old Testament was the model of kingship ordained and organized by God Himself on the familiar, and in all Teutonic races cherished, principle of hereditary right. Reformers of the Church, patriotic nationalists, monarchs raising the fabric of despotic power on the complex system of an earlier time, all found in the Old Testament what they wanted. "In a word," writes the most eminent exponent of Elizabethan Anglicanism, Richard Hooker, "our estate is according to the pattern of God's own ancient elect people, which people was not part of them the Commonwealth and part of them the Church of God, but the self-same people whole and entire were both under one chief governor, on whose supreme authority they did all depend."[1] In the second Canon of 1604 excommunication *ipso facto* is pronounced

[1] *Eccles. Polity*, Bk. VIII., ch. i. 7.

against everyone who affirms "that the King's majesty hath not the same authority in causes ecclesiastical that the godly kings had amongst the Jews and Christian emperors of the primitive Church." "Your Majesty," said Archbishop Cranmer, addressing the little boy whom he was about to crown as King of England, "is God's vicegerent and Christ's vicar within your own dominions, and to see, with your predecessor Josiah, God truly worshipped and idolatry destroyed, the tyranny of the Bishops of Rome banished from your subjects, and images removed. These acts be signs of a second Josiah, who reformed the Church of God in his days."[1]

In Scotland men were rather disposed to emphasize the prophets of ancient Israel than the kings, for the very obvious reason that reformation in Scotland had a prophet to lead it, John Knox, whereas in England we had to make shift with such resuscitated Josiahs as Henry VIII. and Edward VI. The Covenant had been in Israel a great prophetic achievement, and in Scotland it marked the high-water mark of the influence of the ministers. When the Covenant was subscribed in the Church of St. Margaret, Westminster, by the Houses of Parliament, and by the members of the Assembly of Divines (which gave to the Presbyterian Churches the Westminster Confession) it indicated the climax of clerical influence exercised on the principles of primitive Jewish prophecy. I observe that the interesting movement known as Christian Socialism has followed precedent in attaching special importance to prophetic

[1] *v. Works*, vol. II., p. 119.

examples. On the continent, and among the sacerdotal section of the Anglican Church, the source of inspiration appears to be rather sacramental and mediæval, but the Old Testament in any case is the original fountain.

Indeed, the more one reflects on the history of Christianity, the more considerable the influence of the Old Testament is seen to have been. In the third century St. Cyprian shapes the Christian hierarchy by the frank application of Mosaic models; in the eleventh century Gregory VII. finds the draft of a theocracy vested in the popes in the records of ancient Israel; in the sixteenth century the theocratic papacy is destroyed over half Christendom by the force of a national sentiment, which finds its justification and the form of its political expression in the Old Testament; Hebrew prophecy revives in that stern Protestantism which shivers the Divine-right monarchy, and creates a spirit of proud independence before which all forms of non-moral authority perish finally. After the bishops, and the popes, and the presbyters, and the kings, and the middle classes, each in turn, have served themselves of the Old Testament, we are seeing the multitudes of the working people coming to their portion of the common inheritance, and in their turn also finding in the Old Testament a charter of divinely-sanctioned rights. What an amazingly suggestive vision of indestructible, Protean influence vested in the Bible opens before the reflective student of Christian history!

Perhaps we may distinguish between the influence

of the Old Testament and that of the New by saying that while the first has been mainly an influence of precedents, the last has been mainly an influence of ideas. The distinction will serve to indicate the superiority of the New Testament over the Old. For the influence of precedents must always be limited and transitory, while that of ideas may be perpetual and universal. Precedents are salutary in the precise degree in which they do really cover the case for which they are adduced; they become futile and mischievous precisely in proportion as they are not really competent to match the cases for which they are accepted as authoritative. I am prepared to believe that, at the time when the precedents of the Old Testament were recognized, accepted, and applied to life by Christian men, they did correspond sufficiently to the actual situation to be valid and beneficent. A Divine-right ministry expressing itself after Old Testament precedents, now in a Cyprianic episcopate, now in a Hildebrandine papacy, now in a quasi-prophetic presbyterate, may conceivably have matched the needs of successive phases of Christian development. We can see that all have been instruments by means of which the religion of Christ has been brought to bear effectually on the mingled life of human society. But, while my philosophy of history compels me thus to regard with kindly and sympathetic eyes the many and conflicting methods by which Christian men, seeking and finding in the Bible the precedents for action which they felt compelled to take, and only felt free

to take under what they conceived to be Divine authority, have sought their ends, yet I am not less compelled to make my recognition of their use of precedents as valid contingent on the recognition of the fact that, as the circumstances have changed, so the validity has ceased. We have outgrown all forms of clerical Divine right save that which all forms have hitherto agreed to repudiate. In State as in Church we are of necessity leaving the precedents of the Old Testament behind, and the only consequence of continuing to insist on them is to isolate ourselves from the advancing movement of the general life, and to stamp on our own lives the fatal mark of sterility. The abiding influence of Christianity in politics is not to be found in the precedents which it can offer, whether from its sacred literature or from the more voluminous records of its own chequered course, but in the ideas which are for ever presented in the Person and Life of the Lord Jesus Christ. The influence of ideas is capable of being exercised under all varieties of human circumstance, and is none the less potent because it is always an indirect and disguised factor in politics. Ideas, indeed, tend to create institutions competent to express them in practice, and hence there is a sense in which it is true that the ideas of Christianity can be inferred from the distinctive institutions of Christendom. There are, however, so many other influences at work in the shaping of institutions —influences of the soil through which the river of God is passing—that it is an extremely perilous proceeding to accept any institution as authoritatively Christian

Moreover, the facility with which institutions may be perverted, twisted by human craft or ambition into the service of interests the least akin to those which they were ordained to serve, and which seemed to be impressed on them, is amazing. The ideas of the Gospel are perfectly and perpetually embodied, not in any institution, but in a Person, and therefore it is the case that, in the article of personal morality, there is an agreement which overpasses all limits of place, time, degree of civilization, ethnical type, personal idiosyncrasy. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature" is the Apostolic formula, and it remains true and relevant still. Other methods of exerting influence are time-born and time-bound, limited to particular types of men and society, destined sooner or later to fail of effect, and, if perpetuated by a misguided loyalty, to become actually malefic. But this method of personal influence will never fail. Let us grant, if you will, that the Founder of Christianity contributed nothing to political science; that the Apostles, in this respect, continued their Master's tradition; that the New Testament contains nothing that can be fairly regarded as political doctrine, and in point of fact has been found equally serviceable to political systems so diverse as those of Byzantine Absolutism and American Democracy. Let it be granted, if you will, that the Founder of Christianity took no measures for the protection of His followers from the current political errors, that He gave no constitution to His Church, that, in point of fact, His authority has been pleaded with equal confidence by

the advocates of ecclesiastical systems so diverse in spirit and in aspect as that of the Church of Rome on the one hand and that of the Quakers on the other. Make the most you can of the incorrigible parasitism of the Christian society, its singular facility of self-adaptation to actual political conditions, its astonishing imitativeness, and the curious effrontery with which it will ascribe Divine authority and Dominical institution to the recent creations of its own self-preserving instinct. All this may be to the credit of Christianity so long as you must concede—and you must concede—the abiding truth of the ideas of the Gospel, and the perpetual adequacy of their embodiment in the Person and Life of Jesus Christ. In giving men the true conception of personal morality, and enabling them, by the enthusiasm of personal devotion to Himself which He stirred in their hearts, to interpret it in personal practice, Jesus Christ ensured the future of political science. It is because a perfect society can only be built on the foundation of a perfect individual morality that we dare claim for Christianity that, of all the religions of mankind, it alone carries the promise of finality. Grant if you will that, at this stage—taking all the available tests of social strength together—there exists in the Far East a more efficient society than any in Christendom, yet it does not admit of serious question that Christendom possesses what the Far East, in spite of all its splendid heritage of brooding wisdom and social discipline, does not possess—a perfect individual morality expressed recognizably in an historic Person. You

may never hope to derive individual morality from social; you will assuredly, in the long run, gather social morality from individual. The Gospel, in giving to mankind the perfect model of personal goodness, gave also the promise and the potency of the perfect society.

IX

THE CLERGY AND SOCIAL POLITICS[1]

AND THE TWELVE CALLED THE MULTITUDE OF THE DISCIPLES UNTO THEM, AND SAID, IT IS NOT FIT THAT WE SHOULD FORSAKE THE WORD OF GOD, AND SERVE TABLES.—*Acts* vi. 2.

WE are living at present under the dominion of a powerful reaction against a version of Christianity which was, as its most indulgent historians must admit, dangerously individualistic, and irrationally exclusive. Evangelicalism quickly came to mean an excessive concentration on personal salvation, and a severe limitation of human interests. Personal salvation, moreover, was understood in what now seems to

[1] This Sermon was preached in St. Margaret's, Westminster, on June 23rd, 1907.

[2] On July 4th, 1907, the Representative Church Council agreed upon the following resolution, which may be said to combine the resolutions adopted in May by the Houses of the Convocation of Canterbury, and quoted in the following Sermon:—

> "That more attention should be given in the public teaching of the Church to the obligation resting on all Christians to apply in practice the principles of the Gospel as to the duty of the Christian to his neighbour, with special reference to the moral character of the actual conditions of industrial life, but that care should be taken against the risks involved in any partizan use of the Christian pulpit."

us a singularly unworthy sense. Baxter's eschatology, sobered and pointed by Paley's moral philosophy, was certainly a form of Christian teaching out of which the joy and tenderness and abounding hope of the Gospel seemed to have disappeared. The gloom and something of the restraint of mediæval asceticism attached to Christianity as it was commonly professed in the religious society of the early nineteenth century. Then followed three movements of protest, respectively æsthetic and devotional, social, and intellectual. The Oxford Movement, the Christian Socialist Movement, and the Critical Movement, if so we may distingnish them, had at least this element in common, that all reacted with vehemence from the self-absorbed, letter-worshipping Individualism of the later Evangelicals. Liberty of devotion, liberty of service, liberty of thought—these were the irrepressible demands of Christian men, when they had escaped from the long nightmare of panic and prejudice which the great wars of the Napoleonic era induced. The start of the twentieth century, however, finds the Church somewhat disillusioned and dejected. Evangelicalism in the old sense has been effectually destroyed ; it lingers in phrases and mannerisms, but its fundamental postulates have no longer a place in the convictions of religious men ; nothing seems more evident than the finality of the failure which has befallen the once-supreme party, which strangely arrogated to itself the name of "Protestant." After an astonishing career of enthusiasm, and catastrophe, and conflict, and triumph, the Tractarian movement, though probably supreme at this moment in the ranks

of the hierarchy, seems no longer to command the acceptance of the most thoughtful and educated of our people, and, if I may confess my own belief, is not likely to strengthen its position as time passes. The great reaction has spent its force. We may apply to it Dean Church's description of the Evangelicals of an earlier time: "It is nervously afraid of departing from the consecrated phrases of its school, and in the perpetual iteration of them it has lost hold of the meaning they may once have had. It too often finds its guarantee for faithfulness in jealous suspicions, and in fierce bigotries, and at length it presents all the characteristics of an exhausted teaching and a spent enthusiasm. . . . . Yet it keeps its hold on numbers of spiritually-minded persons, for in truth there seems to be nothing better for those who see in the affections the main field for religion. But even of these good men, the monotonous language sounds to all but themselves inconceivably hollow and wearisome; and in the hands of the average teachers of the school, the idea of religion is becoming poor and thin and unreal."[1]

Of the other reactions against dominant Evangelicalism it is only with large deductions that they can be described as "Movements." They were not organized as such, and they possess neither the strength nor the weakness of organized parties, directing combined efforts towards a clearly-perceived goal. Of the critical or liberal reaction I shall not now say anything; but of that which has received the description "Christian Socialist," I must so far speak as it bears on the subject brought before us by the narra-

[1] *The Oxford Movement*, pp. 16, 17.

tive in the Acts, which has been read from the Lectern as the appointed Lesson from the New Testament. What is the place which the Christian clergy ought to hold in the general life of the nation to which they are accredited as religious teachers and pastors? We appear now to be all of one mind in thinking that the religion of Christ must express itself, not only in creating individual sainthoods, but also in bringing to bear upon the course of political and economic development a powerful and stimulating influence. We agree in the assumption that the Gospel provides the true point of view from which social problems ought to be regarded, and the only sound principles of human life. We have definitely parted company with the ascetic doctrines, Mediæval and Puritanic, which set in direct opposition the interest of man as a citizen of the world, and his interest as an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven. We are all at one in maintaining that there is no proper or essential divergence between the one interest and the other; that the conduct which makes for the highest terrestrial well-being makes also for the best happiness in the next life; that, in the familiar phrase of the Apostle, "Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise for the life which now is, and of that which is to come." Our agreement does not stop at this point. When we descend from broad abstract propositions to the actual situation, we should agree in holding that, under the conditions of the world's life, a practical divergence of interest does constantly emerge between the more remote and the immediate interests of men, that the way of virtue is neither always obvious nor

often easy, that an ascetic ordering of life often has been, and often will be, an indispensable requirement of Christian duty, that the Church and the world, though ideally identical (the Church being the world as it should be, the true Kosmos from which every element of Anomia has been banished, the worthy expression of the purpose of the Creator, and the perfect instrument of His will), yet, in fact, are constantly opposed as rivals and even as foes, that the martyr and the reformer are more representative of Christianity than the prosperous and popular citizen. Christian Socialism may be understood as the formulated duty of the Church towards the world, the Church being conceived of as the Divinely-ordained and commissioned redeemer of the world. The phrase itself is unfortunate because of its political suggestions, and I would urge its abandonment, but the ideas which it must be presumed to enshrine are not really in dispute among serious Christians to-day. That the Church has a duty towards the world to which it is Divinely commissioned to bring the Gospel of redemption, and that that duty is not to be shrivelled into the rescue of so many fortunate individuals, are propositions which there is happily no need to argue. How to fulfil it most effectively is the practical question on which difference of opinion, acute difference, if I mistake not, exists.

This difference necessarily connects itself with the conception of the Christian ministry which is accepted, for the fundamental divergence of religious point of view between the Sacerdotalist and the Protestant inevitably makes its appearance, when the task of the

clergy in fulfilling the social mission of the Church is in question. Both the theoretical and the practical questions are illustrated, if not answered, by the narrative of St. Luke, to which now I beg your careful attention. We are carried back to the first beginnings of Christianity, and are permitted to see the process by which the earliest Christians were led to perceive the range of their responsibilities, and the practical requirements of their discipleship. It is a matter of faith with us that the action of the Apostolic founders of the Church represented a special guidance of the Holy Spirit, that therefore we are right in attaching an unique importance to the principles of action which they enounced and to the precedents which they set. Where they based their action on grounds of expediency, we hold that that action must be perpetuated, or reversed, on the same consideration. Where they proclaimed for themselves the possession of Divine injunctions or illuminations, we recognize in their decisions the manifested will of the Divine Head of the Church. We shall keep in mind the warning of Dr. Hort as to "the futility of endeavouring to make the Apostolic history into a set of authoritative precedents, to be rigorously copied without regard to time and place, thus turning the Gospel into a second Levitical Code." In the forefront of our discussion we would place the conclusion to which that great scholar was brought by his studies of the sacred literature: "The Apostolic Age is full of embodiments of purposes and principles of the most instructive kind; but the responsibility of choosing the means was left for ever to the Ecclesia

itself, and to each Ecclesia, guided by ancient precedent on the one hand and future needs on the other. The lesson-book of the Ecclesia, and of every Ecclesia, is not a law but a history." [1]

What, then, are the principles of action disclosed in this narrative of the sacred historian? What are the truths which emerge from the action of the Apostles for the guidance of the Church in all ages? We see the infant Church forced almost at once to turn its attention from the spiritual message to the urgent practical questions which discipleship had raised. How were these poor believers, poor under any circumstances, but quickly reduced to destitution by the hostility of their social superiors, upon whom they ordinarily depended for employment and assistance, to be sustained? How was discrimination to be made between the claimants on Christian support? How might a just and seemly order be maintained among the throng of eager enthusiasts? The Scripture discloses a scene of hastily-improvized charity organisation, shadowed by bickerings and discontent. "Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." Thus in the simplest form emerges that practical problem of poor relief which would engage the thought of the Christian Church throughout history, becoming strangely more complex and difficult as time passed, and leading to many and wonderful developments of benevolence. Observe

[1] *The Christian Ecclesia*, pp. 232, 233.

how the Apostles treat the situation which confronts them. They make appeal to no Divine direction, and claim no supernatural inspiration, but their appeal is to the good sense of the brethren, and their claim is to be released from the personal performance of duties which, however important in themselves, were not consistent with their efficient performance of the specific and incommunicable spiritual task which had been committed to them.

"And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the Word of God, and serve tables. Look ye out, therefore, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue steadfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the Word." The election and ordination of the Seven has commonly been regarded as the institution of the Order of Deacons, which, albeit with very varying functions, has continued in the Church ever since. This view has indeed been questioned, but without good reason. Bishop Lightfoot points out the originality of the apostolic arrangement for meeting the necessity which had emerged. "The institution," he says, "was not merely new within the Christian Church, but novel absolutely. There is no reason for connecting it with any prototype existing in the Jewish community. The narrative offers no hint that it was either a continuation of the order of Levites or an adaptation of an office in the synagogue. The philanthropic purpose for which it was established presents no direct point of contact with

the known duties of either. The Levite, whose function it was to keep the beasts for slaughter, to cleanse away the blood and offal of the sacrifices, to serve as porter at the temple gates, and to swell the chorus of sacred psalmody, bears no strong resemblance to the Christian deacon, whose ministrations lay among the widows and orphans, and whose time was often almost wholly spent in works of charity. And again the Chazan or attendant in the synagogue, whose duties were confined to the care of the building and the preparation for service, has more in common with the modern parish clerk than with the deacon in the infant Church of Christ. It is therefore a baseless, though a very common assumption, that the Christian diaconate was copied from the arrangements of the synagogue. . . . We may fairly presume that St. Luke dwells at such length on the establishment of the diaconate, because he regards it as a novel creation." [1]

It appears, then, that the development of the Christian ministry was from the first determined by practical considerations. Dr. Hort's words are as just as, to all who can appreciate solid learning combined with sound judgment, they are authoritative: "In the Apostolic age . . . the offices instituted in the Ecclesia were the creation of successive experiences and changes of circumstance, involving at the same time a partial adoption first of Jewish precedents by the Ecclesia of Judæa, and then apparently of Judæan Christian precedents by the Ecclesiæ of the Dispersion of the Gentiles. There is no trace in the New Testament

[1] *Philippines*, p. 189.

that any ordinances on this subject were prescribed by the Lord, or that any such ordinances were set up as permanently binding by the Twelve or by St. Paul or by the Ecclesia at large. Their faith in the Holy Spirit and His perpetual guidance was too much of a reality to make that possible."[1]

Yes, the Apostolic precedent is not what our zealots have commonly supposed. Those blessed founders of the Church did not bind upon it a cast-iron constitution which might never be altered save at the peril of Christianity itself; but they set the example of a courageous initiative, and of a willingness to learn from experience, which give to their writings, and to the records of their action, a supreme and enduring value. Just as we are able to reach the level of apostolic faith and courage, shall we also be able to meet the novel problems of our latest age with the same practical wisdom. And the mere recognition of the truth, (which truly lies on the surface of the New Testament, but which throughout Christian history has more often than not been ignored or even denied), that questions of ecclesiastical order and system are properly of inferior importance, to be debated and answered on the ground of expediency, and in the light not of binding precedents but of living principles, I say the mere recognition of this elementary truth would clear out of the way of those, who seek the peace of the Churches, the most obstinate and ancient of the stumbling-blocks. The Apostles decided that it was not expedient for them to retain in their own hands

[1] *v.* p. 230.

the administration of relief. "It is not fit that we should forsake the Work of God, and serve tables." Do these words apply to the situation of the modern clergy? And may we base on them the conclusion that, on a review of all the circumstances, the clergy had best abstain from a direct interference in social politics? That these questions are exercising the minds of Churchmen may be gathered (to name but one of many indications) from the fact that, at the last meeting of the Convocation of Canterbury, resolutions were passed in both Houses with reference to them. In the House of Bishops the resolution ran thus: "That more attention should be given in the public teaching of the Church to the exposition of the duty of the Christian to his neighbour, with special reference to the moral character of the actual conditions of industrial life."

In the Lower House, a more numerous assembly and perhaps in closer contact with the facts of the national life, and therefore better able to estimate the practical consequences of a policy, the resolution was amended into the following form: "That more attention should be given in the public teaching of the Church to the obligation resting on all Christians to apply in practice the principles of the Gospel as to the duty of the Christian to his neighbour, but that care should be taken to guard against the grave risk and profanation involved in any partizan use of the Christian pulpit."

You will readily understand that my judgment accords with the amended resolution. I cannot help thinking that a twofold danger attends the entrance

of the clergy, in their official capacity, into the public discussion of the burning questions of social politics. On the one hand, neglect of primary duty; on the other hand, partizanship. Of the first, little needs to be said. None will question that the clergy are primarily charged with the task of teaching and exhortation, both being by the pledges of ordination closely tied to the study and exposition of the Scriptures. It will be agreed by all thoughtful persons that an adequate performance of this primary obligation will, under the difficult conditions of our time, demand a self-dedication and concentration of mind on religious studies, which will be little consistent with an active share in public agitations. On the second, you will allow me to make a few observations. Experience in many lands, and in almost every age, tends to show that the fault of the Christian clergy, as a direct influence in politics, has been that of servility to the reigning political force, whatever it may be. Absolute government, aristocracy, the constitution, democracy—all in the day of their power receive the eager support of the hierarchies. Is it altogether an unfounded suspicion that the strong tide of Socialistic sentiment, which is now running in all sections of the Christian Church, and in some places, as in Austria, leading to strange political developments, is but the latest illustration of this great law of official parasitism which has prevailed in history? There will be, as I can judge tendencies, little necessity in the future to seek from the clergy direct aid in stimulating the popular demand for social reforms, or the popular appetite for

secular advancement. Rather there will be a great risk that the clergy shall be tempted to purchase a little transient applause at the price of a permanent loss of moral influence. Popular politics will in the future take a direction very perilous to the fundamental moralities on which civilization in any worthy sense rests, and by which alone societies of men can permanently cohere. Those fundamental moralities are consistent with any and every form of political order, which history bequeaths, and human reason allows; but they fail easily before the wild passions of multitudes, and the fierce appetites of materialized classes. Yet these fundamental moralities, and nothing less than these, are the true concern of the Christian Church, and therein conspicuously of the Christian clergy; and the power of both to be true to that great trust depends, in a measure it is difficult to exaggerate, on the attainment and preservation by the clergy of a genuine independence. Only one who has watched the course of ecclesiastical history, and who has had personal experience of the difficult conditions under which the Christian ministry has to be fulfilled in a modern community, can gauge the risks to clerical independence implied in the present tendency to associate the public teaching of the Christian pulpit with popular politics.

In this country especially the avoidance of partizanship is difficult, for our public life is organized on the basis of party, and we are all, almost in spite of ourselves, swept into the following of some party. The questions, which are included in the notion of social reform, are, moreover, far too complex for direct and

official pronouncements by amateurs. Take any one you will, and you must admit that there are more ways than one of answering it. Special knowledge and exceptional ability may, perhaps, entitle some individuals to speak dogmatically on such subjects; but no class of men, certainly not the clergy, can be assumed to possess either of these qualifications. No sincerity can really atone for the injustice, no enthusiasm can wholly conceal the intrinsic unreasonableness, of treating as simple and obvious moral issues such complex and difficult practical matters as those connected with the regulation of the liquor traffic, the housing of the poor, the reformation of public amusements, the mutual relations of employers and employed, and the like. The single moral issue in all such questions is that which underlies all Christian citizenship, nay, all Christian life. "Whether, therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Bring all your life—private, public, business, and pleasure—frankly under the government of the convictions which, as a Christian man, you cannot but possess. Use honestly the powers you have for the guidance of your course as a citizen. Dream not of extraordinary illuminations in the sanctuary, seek no short and easy methods for gaining political wisdom, but bring to the task of civic duty all the resources accessible to you for its fulfilment. Be sure that in the patient and honest effort to play your part Christianly in the world you will not be unhelped, Your religion, your religious observances, your direct and determined charities, even your honest blunders, will be so many channels through which the grace of

good citizenship shall be brought to you, and no taint of fanaticism shall infect the efforts which in Christ's Name you are led to make for the advance of the world. So much the clergyman, in common with his fellow-citizens and fellow-disciples is bound to attempt; he has no other means of political information, no special inspiration, no traditional wisdom, which can empower him to offer authoritative guidance to his brethren. Ask of the clergy what you ask of all other public servants, that they do their duty, no more and no less. Their duty is great and absorbing, and all their powers are too little for its performance. For doing so much they depend more than you know, or perhaps suspect, on the support of a just, even a severe, public opinion within the Church. Do not ask of them that, with whatever excellence of intention, or under whatever pleas of urgency, they should carry the sacred Name of Christ into the conflicts of party, and into the service of class interests. It is not spiritual arrogance but the deep consciousness of the gravity of our religious task, and of the sin which cannot be absent from placing, albeit unconsciously, stumbling-blocks in the way of our own message, which makes some of us adopt for our own the words of the Apostles, and refuse the tempting pressures of the enthusiastic and devoted advocates of social policies. "It is not fit that we should forsake the Word of God, and serve tables."

X

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY [1]

AND DAVID SAID UNTO GOD, IS IT NOT I THAT COMMANDED THE PEOPLE TO BE NUMBERED? EVEN I IT IS THAT HAVE SINNED AND DONE VERY WICKEDLY; BUT THESE SHEEP, WHAT HAVE THEY DONE? LET THINE HAND, I PRAY THEE, O LORD MY GOD, BE AGAINST ME, AND AGAINST MY FATHER'S HOUSE; BUT NOT AGAINST THY PEOPLE, THAT THEY SHOULD BE PLAGUED.—1 *Chronicles* xxi. 17.

THE record of the census and the consequences which followed it carries us far back in the history of civilization to a primitive time when men's minds were haunted and confused with strange notions of God. Plainly the sacred writers held that David had committed a grave sin in ordering the people to be numbered, and the calamity of the pestilence which speedily followed they interpreted as a judgment on the nation, thus compromised by the action of its sovereign. The reluctance of Joab to carry out the King's order may, perhaps, be understood as indicating the superior astuteness of that wily and unscrupulous

[1] [This Sermon was preached in the interest of the Church of England "Waifs and Strays" Society, July 14, 1907, in Westminster Abbey.]

warrior, but more probably represents the average feeling of the time on the subject. Christian expositors, embarrassed by an irrational, but not unnatural, desire to justify the teaching of the sacred narrative, have conjectured various sinful motives as inspiring the king's action. He was puffed up by a guilty arrogance, and wished to parade the extent of his power; or he meditated an excessive taxation, and desired to prepare for it by an accurate enumeration of taxable subjects. This was the Puritan Lightfoot's suggestion. The Lord, he said, "giveth up David to a covetous thought, to number the people, that he may lay a tax upon every poll."[1] It appears evident that the author of the Book of Chronicles was himself somewhat embarrassed by the tradition which he found in the Book of Samuel, for he makes some very suggestive alterations in it, when he adopts it into his own narrative. The older writer had attributed to Jehovah the original notion of the numbering of the people. "Again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and *he* moved David against them, saying, Go, number Israel and Judah." But the later historian revolted against this version of the facts. How could Jehovah Himself suggest the very action which he designed to punish? So we read (by one of the most audacious emendations in all the long history of religion) that "*Satan* stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel." We are under no necessity either to reconcile the contradictions of the earlier and later narratives, or to imagine some adequately sinful motive to account for David's action,

[1] *v. Works*, II. 190.

or to accept the view that the pestilence and the census had any proper connection. "The truth is that we have here one of the ideas common to primitive religions—that man should not inquire into those secrets which the gods prefer to keep to themselves. The number of inhabitants of a country is such a secret; hence the wrath of Yahweh at the census."[1] It is enough for our present purpose to assume, what indeed will not anywhere be disputed, that David honestly believed himself to have incurred the Divine displeasure by his action, that he attributed the pestilence to that Divine displeasure, that he was troubled in conscience at the presumed consequences of his own fault, and that the most painful element in his repentance was the conviction that his sin was being visited on his innocent people. In the description which the Bible contains of David's character, this narrative of the census could hardly be omitted without loss. The characteristic traits of the "man after God's own heart" are clearly shown—his strong will bearing down all opposition, his singular openness to the teaching of experience, his quick sympathy with his people, the frankness of his self-reproach when his conscience showed him his fault, the intense religiousness which makes him throw himself on the Divine Compassion. The day will never come when the words of the text will cease to wake echoes of sympathy in generous hearts, and make appeal to sensitive consciences. "And David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and

[1] *v. Old Testament History*, p. 151. Int. Theol. Lib.

done very wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? let Thine hand I pray Thee, O Lord my God, be against me, and against my father's house; but not against Thy people, that they should be plagued." Two propositions, familiar and undisputed, and yet always falling out of human thought, and coming upon us with something of the threatening shock of an unwelcome and terrifying surprise, are implicit in the royal penitent's prayer. That the consequences of individual wrong-doing may stretch far beyond the limits of the individual life, and are in no case under the control of the individual will, is universally admitted; and that repentance, even the most sincere and self-condemning, cannot undo the consequences of individual fault is a kindred proposition not less well-assured. Repentance, indeed, can do much. It can rescue the individual from the vicious circle within which his sin has imprisoned him, and it can transform him into the minister of blessing. It can even transmute experiences of sin into the safeguards and instruments of righteousness, and it has done this with such effect that, in the record of the Church Militant, the greater heroes of the Cross are also the greatest penitents. Repentance can do so much that we can hardly withhold ourselves from thinking that it can do this also, but here is the fixed limit of its power: beyond this boundary it cannot pass. Every act of wrong is a power for evil let loose in the world, and henceforth pursues therein its separate and uncontrolled way, never heeding the wishes of him who sent it forth on its fell mission. David, horror-stricken at the scenes of death which

mark the progress of the pestilence, and assured that at the root of the whole tragedy lay his own folly, crying out in shame and sorrow as it were a protest against the cruel method of the world, an indictment of the inexorable Providence which ordains the consequences of human acts, is but the type of all penitents to whom has come the vision of the ruin they have themselves brought on the world. If only we could reflect on the larger issues of life, and carry with us into our daily conduct the protection of our thoughts, I suppose there could be no more effective restraint on wilful sin than the knowledge of its widely-ramifying, remote, and undeserved results. The magnitude of resulting misery bears no relation either to the malignancy of original motive, or to the actual turpitude of the fatal act itself. The outrage of anarchy and the inexorable severity of natural law combine in the spectacle of human life; we cannot harmonize the strange and painful discords of the world; but, beneath and through them all, we may dimly trace august and unfailing Moral Laws in operation. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" is the inevitable challenge of our reason, and the irreducible demand of our conscience. We rest on the affirmative answer which Religion returns to both; and in the strength of our faith move on under the burden of the unsolved problems of human life. This morning, as you will already know, we are asked to contribute to the Society which carries on a work of mercy and restoration among those multitudes of hapless children, whom we are accustomed pathetically to describe as the "Waifs and Strays" of our cities.

It occurred to me that it were no unfitting or unimpressive thing to bring the claims of these derelicts into connection with the reflections naturally suggested by the record of David's fault, his punishment, and his repentance. These outcast and desolate children of modern industrial life may not inaptly be described as the victims of the sins of others. I would not, indeed, be understood to adopt a sentimental, still less a pessimistic, view of the Social Problem, which now everywhere encounters us, and compels from the most reluctant the tribute of a certain anxiety, if not of a serious effort to discover some solution. It is not in my opinion true to describe the grave perplexities and scandals of our present situation as the effect of so simple a cause as individual selfishness, or even class selfishness, though undoubtedly both of these evil forces have contributed to the sum of suffering and degradation. In the slow, continuing process of development out of the lower into the higher forms of social organization, it would seem inevitable that much pain and loss to individuals and classes should take place. A very ancient and familiar figure of speech describes the attainment of a new phase in the upward movement of society as a new birth, and as such accompanied with labour and travail. For the ultimate cause of this union of progress and suffering we have to look beyond the sphere in which human motives determine human action, and human action deflects for good or ill the courses of the world. We must limit our view to the last, and leave the first to the doubtful speculations of the philosophers, and the brave paradoxes of the prophets. With this limitation,

however, we shall not escape a sense of direct responsibility for the unhappy condition, in which so many thousands of our children are growing up in our great cities, For when all is said, as to the insoluble problem which lies beyond the phenomena of history, it does not seem possible to avoid the acceptance of four propositions of large range and searching suggestiveness.

1. In the first place, there is the solemn fact of the solidarity of the human race. When St. Paul declared that " none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself," he uttered one of the postulates of social science. Difficult though it be to believe, impossible though it be to demonstrate, it yet remains the case that every action of every individual tells for good or ill on the whole human race, assists or retards the upward movement of mankind, interprets or obscures the revelation of God in the universe. The want and sorrow of these Waifs and Strays are connected we know not how, or in what degree, but assuredly in some manner and degree, with the superfluity and self-indulgence of others. All the generations are linked in the fatal fellowship of a common fortune; and the present is always bearing the burden of the past. No one of us all may take up an outside attitude towards the misery of the world, and repudiate for himself a share of the general responsibility. Reason and Religion combine to demand from us, as we contemplate the unhappy lot of our social outcasts, the ancient confession, " We are verily guilty concerning our brother."

2. In the next place, granting that the misery of

society is part of the process by which the human race moves upward along the ascending path of its Divinely ordained destiny, it yet remains the case that this inevitable burden falls very unequally on men. Some never feel its weight; others fall beneath it. The bearing of the burden is *ex hypothesi* the condition of the common advance. Therefore those, upon whom its desolating pressure comes most cruelly, are justly to be described as the benefactors of the race, vicarious sufferers for the redemption of mankind, unconscious but not the less genuine, martyrs for the cause of man. And if this character be allowed, then we the rest are the beneficiaries of those who suffer. We advance like an army which enters by a breach which has been made by the self-devotion of some forlorn hope. The gay and glittering fabric of society stands on dark sub-structures which never see the sun, or feel the breath of the wind. An element of gratitude enters into the argument of social duty. We owe something to the sufferers; for by their sufferings we have been permitted to enjoy.

3. In the third place, it is absolutely certain that a vast amount of social suffering is unnecessary. Oppression, fraud, selfishness, ambition are so many fountains of social misery which could be stopped with infinite advantage to the interest of humanity. We must not suffer ourselves to be cheated by large phrases into ignoring the facts that stare us in the face. There is no necessity in the nature of things why competition should be ruthless, or possession of wealth should induce arrogance and profligacy, or laws

should be partial, and the administration of them unequal. It is easier to perceive the truth in its application to others, so I will point to you the events which are actually proceeding in Russia in order to illustrate my argument. There we are able to watch the process of transition out of one phase of social organization into another, and, we cannot doubt, a higher, phase. That the process should entail great losses on individuals and classes may be accepted as inevitable; but will any deny that an immense amount of quite unnecessary suffering has been caused, and is being caused, by the perverseness and folly of individuals?

4. In the fourth place, an immense amount of social misery is not only unnecessary but also remediable. It is indeed impossible to set limits to the power of man to help man, to stake out the extent of the regeneration of society which we have it in our power to effect. If a rule for determining social duty be sought, may it not be found in the measure of social opportunity? Where we can help, and perceive clearly that help is needed, there we are bound in conscience to give help. The solution of the ultimate problem of suffering is not imposed on us; it may torture our minds, it need not distress our consciences; but the practical questions which emerge for answer and arrest us in the progress we make from the cradle to the grave, are so many direct demands of God upon us, and we cannot neglect them without insulting our own self-respect. When Jesus Christ and his disciples came upon the "man blind from his birth" it is eminently significant that he disallowed the specula-

tions into which the disciples were, after the common manner of men, beginning to indulge, and required them at once to face the practical aspect of the misery which moved their wonder. Let the ultimate cause of the man's blindness be what it might, the salient fact of the situation was, that a man in distress and capable of being relieved was in presence of One, who had the will and the power to heal him. "Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in Him. We must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work." If any one be disposed to take a gloomy and pessimistic view of the social outlook, I know nothing more suitable to cheer and restore him than the spectacle of such work as that which is carried on by the Society for which I beg your support this morning. Here you have the saddest, because the most undeserved, misfortune encountered by sympathy and help, with such results that the burden of social ruin, which seems ordained to rest on these young lives, is lifted, and they are admitted to a fair share of the joys and possibilities of humanity. What seemed fatally pledged to become twisted and malefic existences, casting shadows and drawing curses on the world, are brought by the hand of Christian charity under the influence of Jesus Christ, and thereby are transformed into useful, happy, even beneficent lives. This work of reclaiming the Waifs and Strays of Society has long passed out of the stage of experiment. It has been demonstrated that if you will take the wretched infants born amid the dolorous and degrading surroundings of the slums

and ghettoes of the modern world, and will change their environment, substituting what is morally, mentally, and physically wholesome for the deplorable circumstances, in which by the accident of birth they are living, you can make sure that, in the most part of the cases, your labours will have success beyond what you dare to hope. Strong and self-respecting manhoods, pure and beautiful characters of wife and mother, will grow from those infancies which, until you came to them in the Spirit and Power of the Lord, seemed so many springs of social degradation. Under all the conditions of modern life, I do not think you need fear that the action of this Society, while admittedly beneficent to individuals, is indirectly ministering to the very source of the misery it aspires to remove, by breaking down, unintentionally, of course, but not the less effectually, the frail barriers of parental self-respect. There are two reasons which satisfy me that there is no substance in this objection. On the one hand, the number of waifs and strays which are absolutely derelicts, in whose case therefore there can be no question of interfering between parents and their proper duty, is so large that the resources of charity are likely to be exhausted before less desperate cases are reached. On the other hand, we have to make our count with streaks and strata of social life, which lie below the level on which the argument of parental self-respect can be reasonably urged. The only instrument of moral elevation which appears suitable in these cases is that of coercive law; their standard of morality is fixed for them by the law; and the only sanctions of virtue which they can

understand are those which the law provides. To rescue the children from the degradation, in which their parents are immersed, appears to be the course of wisdom and of charity alike. Add to these considerations that the proceedings of the Society are controlled by well-informed, experienced, and trustworthy men, whose eyes are open to all the risks to which I have adverted, and I do not think it is necessary to arrest the flow of natural sympathy, or withhold the hand of liberal support. I venture, therefore, with complete assurance of the soundness of this work, to ask you to contribute liberally to its support. Let the eyes of your mind behold these helpless victims of Society, lying prostrate in their unmerited woe like the dead and the dying lay around the Hebrew Monarch in the famous tradition, which has been rehearsed in our hearing to-day, and let the words of ancient penitence find new meaning on your lips. "Even I it is that have sinned and done very wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done?" Let us take home to ourselves a personal responsibility for this sore plague of our cities, which dooms multitudes of young lives to the shadow of want, and the deeper gloom of vice. Men are asking for the credentials of our Christian Faith. What has Jesus Christ contributed to the solution of this social problem, which haunts and pursues us, spoiling our enjoyment of the fair heritage of civilization, and filling our minds with nameless fears even while we seek our joy? We answer, that Jesus Christ has placed in our hands the power to rescue and to restore the worst, to hope and attain the best. He has set on

the tablets of history the record of an inspiring Example; He has breathed into the ear of humanity the courage of a deathless hope; He has added the force of a motive the most powerful and generous in the world; He has proved in a long succession of spiritual victories the competence of the worst and weakest to be saved by His Gospel. The power is His, and through Him, it is ours; but there He stops, arrested in His work of redemption by His reverence for His own handiwork. It is always appeal to free agents; never command to unresisting slaves. "If ye love Me, keep My Commandments"—that is His formula of motive. "Follow Me"—that is His formula of duty. "Inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of these My brethren, ye do it unto Me"—that is His formula of reward.

XI

A.D. 1604

[One result of the controversy moved by the New Marriage Act is to direct attention to the Canons of 1604. In view of the importance attached to these Canons by the Bishops, it is very surprising how slightly they are known, and how very few persons appear ever to have been at the pains to read them. The present writer has received during the last few months many inquiries where the Canons may be found, and, since these inquiries have come from men of education and position, as well clergymen as laymen, he is bound to conclude that there exists very general ignorance as to this code of laws. In the present paper it is proposed to show the circumstances in which the Canons of 1604 were drawn up, and to indicate the reasons why they cannot be regarded as having other value than that which may attach to the few minor regulations which, out of a code of 141 canons, survive in force. As a code the Canons of 1604 are abrogated, or obsolete. As a statement of the principles of Anglicanism they are wholly obsolete. It is an unfortunate result of their nominal authority that it is possible for in-

terested persons to claim for them a moral weight which they do not deserve, and a religious significance which they do not possess.][1]

I. The Ecclesiastical Situation in the Year of Elizabeth's Death.

It is impossible to appreciate the Canons of 1604 without understanding the circumstances in which they were drawn up, because only then will their character as essentially the work of an ecclesiastical party become apparent. It is precisely this partizan character which disqualifies them, and has always disqualified them, for the position they were designed by their framers to fill in the system of the National Church. At the close of Elizabeth's long reign there were many signs that ecclesiastical changes were impending. The policy of suppressing the Puritans had met with small success, for although it was the case that uniformity was more or less secured, yet there was a general sense that the

[1] The full text of the Canons, both Latin and English, will be found printed in Cardwell's Synodalia. A convenient edition of the text with notes by Mackenzie Walcott was published by James Parker and Co. in 1874.

If anyone will be at the pains to read carefully through these Canons, and note how many are (α) rendered unmeaning or irrelevant by the legislation which has created the status of Nonconformity, and established religious equality, (β) directly abrogated by statute, (γ) covered by the Rubrics, rendered statutory by the Caroline Act of Uniformity, (δ) inoperative as regulating business in the ecclesiastical courts which has been transferred to other tribunals, (ε) obsolete, he will be astonished to find how slight in quantity and how trivial in character are the regulations which remain still operative.

Puritans were hardly treated, and a growing suspicion that their leading opponents were not altogether satisfactory exponents of the Protestant religion of the nation. The old Queen's type of Anglicanism had but few followers, and although the immense prestige which to the last attended her hindered any free expression of men's dissent, there can be little doubt that such dissent was very widely-extended. While this is true of the nation at large, it is to be remembered that within the ranks of the Anglican Clergy a movement had been gaining force, which was not only anti-Puritan, but, in principle though not yet in name, anti-Protestant, and which would have suppressed Puritanism, not on political grounds merely, as infringing that religious uniformity which was then held to be indispensable to the safety of the State, but also on religious grounds, as destroying the very being of a "Catholic" Church. Thus we may say that the English people, omitting from our argument the relatively insignificant number of Romish recusants, were divided into three sections. The mass of them were loyal adherents of the National Church, as settled by Elizabeth, but desired certain changes in the Puritan direction, designed to reconcile the moderate Puritans, and so to strengthen the Church against its never-sleeping and ever hostile enemy, the Roman Papacy. A section, not as yet very numerous, but gaining recruits as the hope of reconciling the Puritans faded away, was irreconcilably anti-episcopal, and, like the saintly but eccentric Rector of Hawnes, "praised and preferred the purity of foreign protestant churches,"

and "daily discoursed against episcopal government." [1]

A third section, mainly clerical as yet, but destined to attract a certain number of thoughtful laymen when once its specifically ecclesiastical views had become associated with the revolt of intelligence against the dominant Calvinist theology, had emerged into public

[1] Fuller gives a curious account of this divine. Mr. Thomas Brightman "was born in the town of Nottingham, bred in Queens' College, in Cambridge; where a constant opposition in point of judgment about ceremonies, was maintained between him and Dr. Meryton, afterwards dean of York. Here he filled himself with abilities for the ministry, waiting a call to vent himself in the country." Having been appointed Rector of Hawnes, he "employed himself, both by preaching and writing, to advance God's glory and the good of the Church; witness his learned comments in most pure Latin on the Canticles and Revelation." The last was an eccentric production, which even in that age was objected against as extravagant. In it he "resembled the Church of England to lukewarm Laodicea, praising and preferring the purity of foreign protestant churches. Indeed, his daily discourse was against episcopal government, which, he declared, would shortly be pulled down . . . . However his life was most angelical, by the confession of such who in judgment dissented from him. His manner was always to carry about him a Greek Testament, which he read over every fortnight. . . . He was little of stature, and (though such commonly choleric) yet never known to be moved with anger; and therefore when his pen falls foul on Romish superstition, his friends count it zeal, and no passion. His desire was to die a sudden death, if God so pleased; surely not out of opposition to the English Liturgy, praying against the same, but for some reasons best known to himself. God granted him his desire, a death, sudden in respect of the shortness of the time, though premeditated on and prepared for by him, who 'waited for his change,' and, being a watchful soldier, might be assaulted, not surprised. For, riding in a coach with Sir John Osborne, and reading of a book, (for he would lose no time,) he fainted; and though instantly taken out in a servant's arms, and set on his lap, on a hillock, all means affordable at that instant being used for his recovery, died on the place, on the 24th of August, and is buried in the chancel of Hawnes, (Rev. Dr. Bulkeley preaching his funeral sermon,) after he had faithfully fed his flock therein for fifteen years" (*v.* "Church History," vol. III., p. 233. London, 1837). This is a suggestive picture of the scholarly Puritan: nor is it unimportant to observe that such a man with such views was a respected incumbent of the later Elizabethan Church.

notice in the year 1589. On February 9th in that year Richard Bancroft, Prebendary of Westminster, preached a notable sermon at Paul's Cross. In his sermon he asserted roundly the divine right of the Episcopate. Whatever may be thought of the truth of this doctrine, two things do not admit of question. On the one hand, the doctrine was to Anglican ears novel. Indeed, the contrary doctrine had been laid down by the existing Archbishop of Canterbury (Whitgift) only fifteen years before, and it formed part of the accepted defence of the National Church against the Puritan objections.[1] On the other hand,

[1] *v.* Whitgift's Works. Ed. Parker Society, vol. I., p. 183.

"But now to your paradox: you say that 'matters of discipline and kind of government are matters necessary to salvation, and of faith.' . . . There are two kinds of government in the church, the one invisible, the other visible; the one spiritual, the other external. The invisible and spiritual government of the church is, when God by his Spirit, gifts, and ministry of his word, doth govern it, by ruling in the hearts and consciences of men, and directiug them in all things necessary to everlasting life: this kind of government indeed is necessary to salvation, and it is in the church of the elect only. The visible and external government is that which is executed by man, and consisteth of external discipline, and visible ceremonies practised in that church, and over that church, that containeth in it both good and evil, which is usually called the visible church of Christ. . . . If you mean this kind of government, then must I ask you this question, whether your meaning is that to have a government is necessary to salvation; or to have some one certain form and kind of government, not to be altered in respect of time, persons, or place? Likewise would I know of you what you mean by 'necessary unto salvation'; whether you mean such things without the which we cannot be saved, or such things only as be necessary or ordinary helps unto salvation: for you know that this word 'necessary' signifieth, either that without the which a thing cannot be, or that without the which it cannot so well and conveniently be. . . . And yet must I ask you another question, that is, whether you mean that this 'government' and 'kind of government' is 'necessary' at all times, or then when the church is collected together, and in such place where it may have government. For you know that the church is sometimes by persecution so dispersed that it appeareth not, as we read Apocal. VI., nor hath any certain place to

the doctrine at that time seemed hardly less than absurd. The Reformation was not a very distant process; men were living whose fathers could have

remain in; so that it cannot have any external government, or exercise of any discipline. But to be short, I confess that in a church collected together in one place, and at liberty, government is necessary in the second kind of necessity! but that any one kind of government is so necessary that without it the church cannot be saved, or that it may not be altered into some other kind thought to be more expedient, I utterly deny: and the reasons that move me so to do be these:

"The first is, because I find no one certain and perfect kind of government prescribed or commanded in the scriptures to the church of Christ; which no doubt should have been done, if it had been a matter necessary unto the salvation of the church. Secondly, because the essential notes of the church be these only; the true preaching of the church of God, and the right administration of the sacraments; for, as Master Calvin saith in his book against the anabaptists, 'This honour is meet to be given to the word of God and to his sacraments, that wheresoever we see the word of God truly preached, and God according to the same truly worshipped, and the sacraments without superstition administered, there we may without all controversy conclude the church of God to be'; and a little after: 'So much we must esteem the word of God and his sacraments, that, wheresoever we find them to be, there we may certainly know the church of God to be, although in the common life of men many faults and errors be found.' The same is the opinion of other godly and learned writers, and the judgment of the reformed churches, as appeareth by their confessions. So that, notwithstanding government, or some kind of government, may be a part of the church, touching the outward form and perfection of it, yet is it not such a part of the essence and being, but that it may be the Church of Christ without this or that kind of government: and therefore the 'kind of government' of the church is not 'necessary unto salvation.'"

Cf. also p. 368. "Of 'discipline' also 'and government' I have something spoken before, and mind to speak hereafter, when further occasion is offered: in this place it is answer sufficient to say that the contention is not whether 'discipline or government' be necessary in the church or no, but whether this or that kind and form of 'discipline and government' be necessary, and whether there be one certain kind and form of 'discipline and government' to be used in the church at all times and in all places. As for 'pastors, bishops, doctors, deacons, &c.,' they be necessary ministers in the church; but it doth not therefore follow that there must be always one kind and form of government."

This of course is still the formal doctrine of the church of England as set forth in Article XIX. "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached,

told them that the Elizabethan settlement had been effected in the teeth of the opposition of the united Episcopate: in thousands of homes there were cherished memories of suffering for conscience' sake during the dark time of Roman Catholic triumph under Mary, when the prime agents in the persecution of English Protestants were the Bishops, and when their victims had found hospitality and protection in churches abroad where bishops had been abolished. Bancroft's doctrine might be true, but it was to the mass of his countrymen both novel and apparently absurd. His sermon has been called "the first manifesto of the High Church or Anglo-Catholic party." Once vented, however, the notion of a Divine-right Episcopacy made rapid progress among the clergy, in whose minds it easily united with the natural resentment against the often exasperating and unreasonable conduct of the Puritans, and with the more respectable sentiment hostile to their excessive and intolerable dogmatizing.

The reaction against the Calvinist domination was already beginning, and Bancroft's sermon was but one of many indications of a desire to break away from the control of the foreign divines. In 1595 another preacher, William Barrett, created a storm in Cambridge by a sermon in the University church

and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." There might have been much doubt in Anglican minds of the præ-Laudian epoch as to the ecclesiastical character of the Church of Rome, but there was none at all as to that of the reformed Churches of Scotland and the Continent. See a characteristic and valuable letter of J. R. Green on this point. It is addressed to E. A. Freeman and is printed on p. 360 of the vol. of *Letters*, edited by Leslie Stephen.

which contained "some sharp and unbecoming speeches of that Reverend man (Calvin) and other learned foreign Protestant writers." Mr. Gooch notes this sermon as "founding the Anglo-Catholic movement at Cambridge." From another quarter the Episcopalian tendency gathered strength. The social importance and relatively considerable wealth of the English Bishops rendered them respectable in the eyes of foreign scholars like Saravia and Casaubon, whom they patronized and protected, and who repaid their favours by championing their cause. But, though both these distinguished Presbyterians were admitted to the ministry of the Church of England, and held important preferment therein, neither felt it necessary in point of principle, nor was forced by necessity of law, to be episcopally re-ordained.[1] Even those who, like Keble and the

[1] The case of Saravia is particularly interesting, for not only is he regarded as (to use Keble's language) "a distinct and independent testimony to the doctrine of exclusive divine right in Bishops," but also it is boldly argued that, "since Saravia was afterwards in familiar intercourse with Hooker, and his confidential adviser when writing on nearly the same subjects, we may with reason use the recorded opinions of the one for interpreting what might seem otherwise ambiguous in the other." Dr. Sprott writes as follows on the subject of his supposed re-ordination in England:—

"It has been said that Saravia was, contrary to the usual practice of the time, re-ordained when admitted to benefices in England. Diocesan registers have been examined and all likely sources of information explored for some notices of his having received episcopal ordination, but without success. Had he done so, it could scarcely have escaped comment from friend and foe. The complete absence of proof, taken along with the elevation of the Scottish presbyters to the episcopate in 1610 by English bishops, without re-ordination, and with the declaration of Archbishop Bancroft that when bishops could not be had the ordination by presbyters must be esteemed lawful, seems to settle the question the other way. Further, if Saravia had been re-ordained, Morton, Bishop of Durham, an intimate friend of Hooker, could not have written, as he did in 1620, that re-ordination under like circum-

present Bishop of Oxford, hold that Hooker was fundamentally agreed with the advocates of the

stances 'could not be done without very great offence to the reformed churches,' and that 'he did not choose to be the originator of such a scandal.' (*v. Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. L., p. 300.) Strype's account of Saravia's reasons for writing in defence of Bishops has an interest of its own :—

"Afterwards, coming into England, he fell into discourse of this subject with some pastors of this church, who wondered at his opinion of Bishops, and seemed to him to believe, that he rather brought it to their ears as a matter of discourse, than that he truly thought so in his mind: besides he saw their own churches (*i.e.*, in the Low Countries where he lived) look that way, as favouring the seditious and schismatic party of the Church of England, and might give this faction in England some cause to depart from and contemn this church. That he therefore, on that account, to free those churches where he lived and whereof he was a member, from such suspicion, he took upon him the pastoral ministry in the Church of England, and withal set forth his Tract of the different Degrees of Ministers in the Church; whereby he might (in the name of the reformed churches abroad) give a testimony to the world of a conjunction of their minds in one and the same faith. And this he was invited to do by the good example of the Bishops of the Church of England, who, notwithstanding their rites and ceremonies were different from those of the churches abroad, among which he lived, yet did not only bear and suffer strangers to use their own customs and rites in their dioceses, but also friendly embraced and cherished them (as they did the Dutch and French people, in London, Canterbury, Norwich, Colchester, Sandwich, Southampton, &c.). And, therefore, he added, that they did ill, whosoever separated and divided one from another, because of external rites and ceremonies.

"And when he saw that all the best sort of men did not abstain from the communion of their churches abroad, in like manner he always thought that he himself ought to hold communion with the churches of England, in all places where he should live. And that whensoever it happened that he should be present in their churches when the Lord's supper was celebrated, he partook with them in those sacred symbols of peace and unity of Christians. And that it was a certain sign of a very weak judgment, or else of a Pharisaical pride and conceit, to refuse the communion of the Church (in which Christ, and grace obtained for us by Christ, is purely taught) only for different external rites" (*v. Life of Whitgift*, Bk. IV., Ch. xii., p. 423. London, 1718). The suggestion of all this is rather that Saravia felt himself, and was felt to be, conferring a favour on the Church of England, than receiving one from it.

Casaubon appears to have formed a very definite dislike of his native Calvinism, and to have had a real affection for the system of the English Church, but he remained in the communion of the French

exclusive Divine right of the Episcopate, yet perforce admit that his language readily carries another

Church and held his place as Prebendary of Canterbury without dreaming of reordination. "If Casaubon received the eucharist on the last day from the hands of an English Bishop, he could do this without giving umbrage to the French ministers, on the score of the intimate friendship which subsisted between himself and Andrewes. And before the rise of the Laudian school, the English church and the reformed churches of the continent mutually recognized each other as sisters" (*v. Isaac Casaubon*, by Mark Pattison, p. 472. London, 1875).

Cf. Spottiswoode's *History of the Church of Scotland*, vol. III., p. 209. Edinburgh, 1859.

"A question in the meantime was moved by Dr. Andrewes, Bishop of Ely, touching the consecration of the Scottish bishops, who, as he said, 'must first be ordained presbyters, as having received no ordination from a bishop.' The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Bancroft, who was by, maintained 'that thereof there was no necessity, seeing where bishops could not be had, the ordination given by the presbyters must be esteemed lawful; otherwise that it might be doubted if there were any lawful vocation in most of the reformed churches.' This applauded to by the other bishops, Ely acquiesced, and at the day and in the place appointed the three Scottish bishops were consecrated."

"It is not without significance that when, after the Restoration, the Scottish hierarchy was restored, the English Bishops were less complaisant, and insisted on re-ordaining Sharp and Leighton, who had received Presbyterian orders. It is to the abiding discredit of the saintly Leighton that he did not support his colleague in resisting this intolerable and quite unwarrantable insult." See Burnet, *History of his own Times*, vol. I., p. 231 f. Oxford, 1823.

> "When the time fixed for the consecration of the bishops of Scotland came on, the English bishops finding that Sharp and Leighton had not episcopal ordination, as priests and deacons, the other two having been ordained by bishops before the wars, they stood upon it, that they must be ordained, first deacons and then priests. Sharp was very uneasy at this, and reminded them of what had happened when king James had set up episcopacy. Bishop Andrewes moved at that time the ordaining them, as was now proposed—but that was overruled by king James, who thought it went too far towards the unchurching of all those who had no bishops among them. But the late war, and the disputes during that time, had raised these controversies higher, and brought men to stricter notions, and to maintain them with more fierceness. The English bishops did also say, that by the late act of uniformity that matter was more positively settled, than it had been before—so that they could not legally consecrate any, but

sense, and that the practice of his time was unfavourable to the extreme view.[1] "For nearly up-

> those who were according to that constitution, made first priests and deacons. They also made this difference between the present time and king James's: for then the Scots were only in an imperfect state, having never had bishops among them since the reformation—so in such a state of things, in which they had been under a real necessity, it was reasonable to allow of their orders, how defective soever—but that of late they had been in a state of schism, had revolted from their bishops, and had thrown off that order—so that orders given in such a wilful opposition to the whole constitution of the primitive church was a thing of another nature. They were positive in the point, and would not dispense with it. Sharp stuck more at it than could have been expected from a man that had swallowed down greater matters. *Leighton did not stand much upon it. He did not think orders given without bishops were null and void. He thought, the forms of government were not settled by such positive laws as were unalterable—but only by apostolical practices, which, as he thought, authorized episcopacy as the best form. Yet he did not think it necessary to the being of a church. But he thought that every church might make such rules of ordination as they pleased*, and that they might reordain all that came to them from any other church; and that the reordaining a priest ordained in another church imported no more, but that they received him into orders according to their rules, and did not infer the annulling the orders he had formerly received. These two were upon this privately ordained deacons and priests. And then all the four were consecrated publicly in the abbey of Westminster."

Cf. Kirkton's contemptuous account: "Sheldon was peremptory, either they must renunce their old presbyterian ordination, or misse their expected episcopal coronation, so they were content rather to deny themselves to be presbyters than not to be received bishops: and when they consented, Sheldon told Sharp that was the Scottish fashion, to scruple at everything and swallow anything." *History of the Church of Scotland*, p. 137. Edinburgh, 1817.

[1] A careful and, in the main, just summary of Hooker's teaching about Episcopacy is given by the present Bishop of Oxford in his excellent *Introduction to the Vth Book of Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*, pp. 106–120. (Oxford, 1899.) After stating on the authority of the VIIth Book that he (Hooker) reached at last a deliberate agreement with "the general received persuasion held from the first beginning, that the Apostles themselves left bishops invested with power above other pastors," Dr. Paget proceeds:—"But while he held this clear conviction on the chief point, he maintained a reserve which is also characteristic of his habit of mind and general position. For he refused

"to the time when he wrote," says Keble most justly, "'numbers had been admitted to the ministry of the Church of England, with no better than Presbyterian ordination; and it appears by Travers's Supplication to the Council, that such was the construction not uncommonly put upon the statute of the 13th of Elizabeth, permitting those who had received orders in any other form than that of the English Service Book, on giving certain securities, to exercise their calling in England."[1]

As yet the Episcopalian movement was clerical, academic, and scholarly: it had not penetrated far into the nation, which remained vehemently anti-papal and mildly Puritan. If, however, the course of events should seem to draw together the new Episcopalianism and "Popery," it would be inevitable that the vehement Puritanism, which had as yet but few followers, would become popular; and if in the vital constitutional conflict, which wise men might have faintly perceived to be coming when the Tudor régime ended, this already suspected Episcopalianism should definitely attach itself to the cause of personal monarchy, then, indeed, the more violent Puritanism would become a destructive force sweeping the legal Establishment to destruction. Bancroft made Laud

to infer from the divine sanction of Episcopacy any sweeping conclusion as to the absolute and invariable necessity of it." The fact would seem to be that Hooker's argument did not wholly accord with his personal sympathies. He was, however, a man great enough to distinguish between a *pious opinion* fondly held, and the *truth* which must be insisted on as claiming of right sane men's acceptance. This is a distinction which our present Episcopalian zealots have wholly lost from view, with the unhappy results which are notorious.

[1] *v. Hooker's Works*, ed. Keble, vol. I., p. lxxvi. Oxford. 1836.

possible. On the basis of the Canons of 1604 those of 1640 were logical enough ; and the two sets of Canons may stand for the historic terms between which the Episcopalian experiment was tried and failed. In the year that Queen Elizabeth died there was offered to the English Church one of the three great opportunities of effectively unifying the religious life of the English people. Then, as again in 1660 and in 1689, there was a general consensus among thoughtful Englishmen, who were not partisans, that the National Church might by some modifications of its system be made acceptable to all reasonable persons. In all three cases the same cause induced the same failure. A fanatical Episcopalianism wrecked a moderate policy, whether advocated by a great philosopher like Bacon in 1603,[1] or by a saintly Nonconformist like Baxter in 1660,[2] or by a tolerant Churchman like

[1] *v.* Bacon's *Certain Considerations touching the better Pacification and Edification of the Church of England.* This admirable production was dedicated to James I. and presented to him on his entrance into England. I quote from the reprint of 1640, which is the only copy I possess :—

"I for my part do confess, that in reading the Scriptures, I could never find any such thing, but that God had left the like liberty to the Church Government, as he hath done to the Civil Government, to be varied according to time and place and accidents. . . . the substance of doctrine is immutable, and so are the general rules of government ; but for rites and ceremonies and for the particular hierarchies, policies, and disciplines of Churches, they be left at large. And therefore it is good we return unto the ancient bonds of unity in the Chnrch of God, which was one faith, one baptism, and not one hierarchy, one discipline, and that we observe the league of Christians, as it is penned by our Saviour Christ, which is in substance of doctrine this, 'He that is not with us is against us.' But in things indifferent and but of circumstance, this : 'He that is not against us is with us.'"

Dr. Gardiner says that Bacon was the most influential and, in his ecclesiastical views, representative member of the House of Commons which met in 1604 (*v. History of England*, vol. I., p. 164).

[2] *v.* Baxter's *Autobiography*, p. 207 f. He described his negotiations

Tillotson in 1689. In every case the will of the Church of Christ, if indeed the Church of Christ be held to consist, not merely of a few clergy, but of the body of the faithful who have His Spirit of justice and charity, was defeated by the subtle and blinding spirit of hierarchical self-assertion. It is a suggestive and melancholy retrospect.

II. THE KING.

James I., like Charles II. and William of Orange, came to reign over a people from whom he was parted by race, by habit, by inclination, by training. In reading the history of the successive attempts to make the Church of England truly national, we must allow something for the fact that in every instance the Sovereign was an alien. Yet all three monarchs seemed to be by interest clearly committed to the cause of religious peace, and perhaps all may have believed that they did what it lay in their power to do

with Hammond and others. While the political situation was uncertain, they met his approaches with sympathetic but vague language: as soon as the popular enthusiasm for the restored Monarchy gave them a free hand, they refused the smallest concessions.

"But since the war, the diocesan party, by Dr. Hammond's means, was gone to a greater distance, and grown higher than before, and denied the very being of the reformed Churches and Ministry; and avoided all ways of agreement with them, but by an absolute submission to their power (as the papists do by the protestants); and that there is a wondrous difference between the cause of the one party and the other."

Baxter had none the less a very deep regard for Hammond, who, though on the subject of Episcopacy an intractable bigot, was personally a saint. "I took the death of Dr. Hammond for a very great loss; for his piety and wisdom would sure have hindered much of the violence which after followed."

to secure it, and if all three failed of their object, justice will not place on their shoulders the heaviest burden of censure. James was already a seasoned controversialist when he arrived in England in the spring of 1603, and, unfortunately, the course of his polemical experiences had developed his prejudices and sharpened his wits precisely against the arguments and methods which the Puritans affected. He was learned, and vain of his learning; fond of arguing, but not at all willing to admit defeat in argument; a despot with a strong tincture of Machiavellian state-craft, who yet had a conscientious scrupulosity on certain points, which would have become a country clergyman. Add that he was extremely garrulous and fond of public speaking.

Lord Acton, a careful and erudite writer, speaks of "the filthiness of his private life and conversation, which foreign envoys described in language which nobody has ever had the courage to print,"[1] and this circumstance cannot have made it easier for the Puritan divines to accept submissively his protracted exhortations and rebukes.[2] He was clearly a shrewd judge of men, even when his incorrigible weakness yielded to their demands against his better judgment. Hacket's account of the King's interview with Williams when the question of appointing Laud to the bishopric of St. David's was under discussion, reveals

[1] *v. Lectures on Modern History*, p. 198. London, 1906.

[2] Dr. S. R. Gardiner, however, disallows this: "Warmly affectionate to those with whom he (James) was in daily intercourse, he never attached himself to any man who was truly great. He mistook flattery for devotion, *and though his own life was pure*, he contrived to surround himself with those of whose habits there was no good report." *v. History*, vol. I., p. 49.

a remarkably just estimate of the candidate's character, and the probable consequences of placing power in his hands.[1] Dr. Gardiner's balanced verdict on

[1] Hacket describes Williams as subtly winning the King's assent to Laud's promotion in this wise: "Accordingly he watched when the king's affections were most still and pacificous; and besought his Majesty to think considerately of his chaplain the Doctor (Laud) who had deserved well when he was a young man in his zeal against the Millenary petition; and for his incorruption in religion, let his sermons plead for him in the royal hearing, of which no man could judge better than so great a scholar as his Majesty. 'Well, (says the King) I perceive whose attorney you are, Stenny hath set you on. You have pleaded the man a good Protestant, and I believe it; neither did that stick in my breast when I stopped his promotion. But was there not a certain lady that forsook her husband and married a lord, that was her paramour? Who knit that knot? Shall I make a man a prelate, one of the Angels of my church, who hath a flagrant crime upon him?' 'Sir, (says the Lord Keeper very boldly) you are a good master, but who dare serve you, if you will not pardon one fault, though of a scandalous size, to him that is heartily penitent for it? I pawn my faith to you, that he is heartily penitent; and there is no other blot that hath sullied his good name. Velleius said enough to justify Murena that had committed but one fault, *Sine hoc facinore potuit videri probus.*' 'You press well,' says the King, 'and I hear you with patience; neither will I receive a trespass any more, which repentance hath mortified and buried. And because I see I shall not be rid of you unless I tell you my unpublished cogitations: *the plain truth is, that I keep Laud back from all place of rule and authority, because I find he hath a restless spirit, and cannot see when matters are well, but loves to toss and change, and to bring things to a pitch of reformation floating in his own brain, which may endanger the steadfastness of that which is in a good pass, God be praised.* I speak not at random; he hath made himself known to me to be such an one: for when three years since I had obtained of the Assembly of Perth to consent to five articles of order and decency in correspondence with this Church of England, I gave them promise by attestation of faith made, that I would try their obedience no further anent ecclesiastic affairs, nor put them out of their own way, which custom had made pleasing unto them, with any new encroachments. Yet this man hath pressed me to invite them to a nearer conjunction with the liturgy and canons of this nation; but I sent him back again with the frivolous draught he had drawn. It seems I had remembered St. Austin's rule better than he, *Ipsa mutatio consuetudinis, etiam quae adjuvat utilitate, novitate perturbat.* For all this he feared not mine anger, but assaulted me again with another ill-fangled platform, to make that stubborn kirk stoop more to the English pattern; but I durst not play fast and loose with my word. He knows

James I. is, perhaps, the justest and most illuminating of modern estimates. One sentence might almost serve as the key to his conduct, and the cause of his really tragic failure at the Hampton Court Conference: "With a thorough dislike of dogmatism in others, he himself was the most dogmatic of men, and—most fatal of all defects in a ruler—he was ready to conceive the worst of those who stood up against him." We may add another sentence scarcely less illuminating: "Whoever would put on an appearance of deference, and would avoid contradicting him on the point on which he happened to have set his heart at the moment might lead him anywhere."

not the stomach of that people, but I ken the story of my grandmother the Queen-regent, that after she was inveigled to break her promise made to some mutineers at a Perth meeting, she never saw good day, but from thence, being much beloved before, was despised of all the people. And now your importunity hath compelled me to shrive myself thus unto you, I think you are at your furthest, and have no more to say for your client.' 'May it please you, Sir,' says the Lord Keeper, 'I will speak but this once: you have indeed convicted your chaplain of an attempt very audacious, and very unbeseeming; my judgment goes quite against his. C. Gracchus mended nothing but lost himself in his tribuneship, *qui nihil immotum, nihil tranquillum, nihil quietum, nihil denique in eodem statu relinquebat.* I am assured, he that makes new work in a church, begets new quarrels for scribblers, and new jealousies in tender consciences. Yet I submit this to your sacred judgment, that Dr. Laud is of a great and tractable wit. He did not well see how he came into this error; but he will presently see the way to come out of it. Some diseases, which are very acute, are quickly cured.' 'And is there no whoe, but you must carry it?' says the King. 'Then take him to you, but on my soul you will repent it'; and so went away in anger, using other fierce and ominous words, which were divulged in the court, and are too tart to be repeated. So the Lord Keeper procured for Dr. Laud his first rochet, and retained him in his prebend of Westminster, a kindness which then he mightily valued. . . ." (*v.* Hacket's *Life of Williams*, p. 64, 1693).

[2] *v. History of England* 1603–1642, vol. I., p. 49. London, 1883.

III. The Bishop of London.

At the time of James's arrival in England the unquestioned leader of the English Hierarchy was Richard Bancroft, for although Archbishop Whitgift yet lived, he was feeble in body, and broken in spirit, a man of an older generation, who could perceive the unwisdom of the younger men, whom yet he could not restrain. "Indeed," says Fuller, "he (Bancroft) was in effect archbishop whilst bishop, to whom Doctor Whitgift, in his decrepit age, remitted the managing of matters; so that he was the soul of the high commission." From the start of his career he had been immersed in the anti-Puritan controversy, and his connection with it had been singularly unfortunate. Since the day when he had unearthed a libel attached to the Queen's arms in one of the churches of Bury, he had flung himself into the fray with an ardour and unscrupulousness, which marked him out from the rest, and earned him a rapid promotion. In 1585 an unprinted treatise in the State Paper Office "shows that he had definitely taken up the *rôle* for which he was afterwards distinguished, as a vigorous and uncompromising opponent of Puritanism. . . . . It was mainly through his vigilance that the printers of the Marprelate tracts were detected, and when they were brought before the Star Chamber, he instructed the queen's counsel. He is also said to have originated the idea of replying to the tracts in a like satirical vein, as was done by Thomas Nash and others with considerable

success."[1] It will be seen from these facts to what category of men he belonged, that of the energetic and trusted police-officer.[2] It is a type neither sympathetic, nor profound, nor really wise, and never popular. In 1597, he succeeded the unfortunately-married Fletcher as Bishop of London,[3] and in that

[1] *v. Dict. of Nat. Biog.* vol. iii., p. 109.

[2] *Cf.* Frere, *History of the Church of England*, p. 308.
"Whitgift's antecedents had been those of a peacemaker. . . . Bancroft's had been those of a prosecutor."

[3] In view of recent discussions I shall not apologize for extracting the curious and illuminating experiences of this amiable prelate from the pages of Strype :

> "The See of London became void also this year (1594) by the death of Aylmer. Fletcher, Bishop of Worcester, affected a translation thither; chiefly because that city he most delighted in, where he had his education, most common residence and where he had many agreeable friends, and a considerable share in the love and esteem of the citizens, who desired that he might be their Bishop; and that he might be nearer the court, where his presence was accustomed much to be; and his influence might be of use to serve the court. . . . The solicitation of this bishop (who was courtly, well spoken, and the Queen's chaplain) succeeded. . . . no sooner was he Bishop of London, but he, being a widower, married a fine lady and widow, and (as we are told) the sister of Sir George Gifford, one of the Queen's Gentlemen Pensioners. And perhaps that was one of the secret reasons of the Bishop's endeavours to be translated to London, to gratify this lady's desire to live near the court. This marriage (as the Queen liked not marriage at all in the clergy) she thought so very undecent in an elderly clergyman, and a bishop, that before had been married, that he fell under her great displeasure. And she gave him either a reprimand by her own mouth, or sent a message to him by some other, not to appear in her presence, nor to come near the court. The Bishop, finding himself in this bad condition, applied himself to the Lord Treasurer, by a letter from Chelsea, to declare his case, and to use his good office for him to the Queen. . . . But notwithstanding, a command was soon despatched from the Queen to the Archbishop, to suspend the said Bishop from the exercise of his episcopal function. And on the 23rd Feb. (1594–5) the censure was executed on him by the Archbishop's own mouth; for having then sent for the Bishop, his Grace acquainted him with the heavy sentence of her Majesty, viz., to

position had become, in all but name, Primate of the Church. He was now sixty years old, and the chance of his life had come. There could be no doubt how the situation would appear in his eyes. The chance of crushing Puritanism once for all had come, and must be used to the full. In that spirit, his mind made up against all concessions, Bancroft went into

> cease the exercise of his episcopal and ecclesiastical jurisdiction. . . . It was not before six months after, that the Bishop seems to have been restored. . . . But tho' this Bishop was thus restored to the discharge of his office, yet the Queen would not permit him to come into her presence for a twelvemonth. . . . Whether our Bishop ever after recovered his place he once had in the Queen's favour, or no, I cannot tell, tho' we have an author that tells us the Queen promised and gave him a visit at Chelsea. It is certain he died a short time after, suddenly in his chair, taking tobacco, which was not usually taken in those days, unless physically, or as a melancholy companion" (*v. Life of Whitgift*, bk. IV., ch. xiii).

In the Millenary Petition the Puritans asked "that King Edward's statute for the lawfulness of ministers' marriages be revived": and *this* demand, which had the sympathy of the Bishops for obvious reasons, *was* conceded. The right of the clergy to marry is wholly based (α) on statute; and (β) on the assumption that statute over-rides the (canonical) "Law of the Church."

It is not unusual to hear clergymen combine the most ardent professions of attachment to the Royal Supremacy with the most positive declarations that they will not obey the existing ecclesiastical Supreme Court. Has it ever occurred to them that they may lie open to the charge of disingenuousness? The Royal Supremacy, as they imagine it now, has never existed in this country. The Tudors and the Stuarts wielded an authority over the Church which was so great as to become quite intolerable. The main instrument of that Supremacy (which Bancroft and Laud made matter of faith, and imposed as such on the Church under anathema in their several sets of canons), the High Commission Court, was happily abolished after the Revolution, and the Privy Council is but the mild, constitutional expression of what was once little less than an unlimited and irresponsible autocracy. The modern High Churchman claims all and more than all that his Laudian predecessors claimed, but whereas their doctrines of ecclesiastical independence were chastened by a vigorous and active Royal Supremacy, he has nothing to reckon with except the courts, which he conscientiously repudiates.

the Hampton Court Conference, and played therein a part which contributed its least worthy elements to the squalid record of its proceedings.

IV. The Hampton Court Conference.

It is not necessary to rehearse the narrative of the several days of so-called discussion. The narrative is sufficiently familiar, and may be read in the standard histories. Barlow's "Summe and substance of the Conference" is a contemporary, and probably a trustworthy, account of what happened, although it is not to be questioned that his tone is scornfully anti-Puritan.[1] From the start care was taken to place

[1] *v.* Fuller. *Church History of Britain*, vol. III., p. 192. London, 1837.

"But the nonconformists complained, that the King sent for their divines, not to have their scruples satisfied, but his pleasure propounded; not that he might know what they could *say*, but they what he would *do* in the matter. Besides, no wonder if Dr. Reynolds a little lost himself, whose eyes were partly dazzled with the light of the king's majesty, partly daunted with the heat of his displeasure. *Others complain that this Conference is partially set forth only by Dr. Barlow, dean of Chester, their professed adversary, to the great disadvantage of their divines.* And when the Israelites go down to the Philistines, to whet all their iron tools, no wonder if they set a sharp edge on their own, and a blunt one on their enemies' weapons."

Heylyn in *The History of the Presbyterians* says the truth of Barlow's narrative "having been universally approved above fifty years, hath been impugned of late by some sorry scribblers of the Puritan faction; and a report raised of some retractation which he is fabled to have made at the time of his death, of the great wrong which he had done to the Millenaries." He thinks it enough for "the clearing of that reverend person from so foul a calumny" to quote from James I.'s Proclamation, announcing the results of the Conference (p. 373).

That the notion of unfair treatment held its ground among the Nonconformists appears from a passage in Baxter's "Autobiography," p. 306: "Our conference and cause would be misreported and

the Puritan representatives in a false position. The notion of a "Conference" was tacitly abandoned, and the proceedings rather resembled those of a law court, in which suspected persons are put on their defence. The first meeting was private, none but the King and the prelates being present. It appears to have been James's purpose to ascertain what would be agreeable to the hierarchy, and to shape his course accordingly. Everything was to be settled before the Puritans were heard, and when they should be permitted "to bring in their complaints," they would have the disadvantage of addressing them to men who had been already assured of the King's support. Barlow's account of the impression made on the Bishops and Deans by the first day's proceedings needs no comment. It enables us to place the subsequent discussions in their true perspective.

> "And thus . . . . we were dismissed after three hours and more spent, which were soon gone, so admirably, both for understanding, speech, and judgment, did his Majesty handle all those points, sending us away, not with contentment only, but astonishment, and, which is pitiful, you will say, with shame to us all, that a King, brought up among Puritans, not the learnedst men in the world, and schooled by them, swaying a kingdom full of business and troubles, naturally given to much exercise and repast, should in points of divinity show himself as expedite and perfect, as the greatest scholars and most industrious students there present might not outstrip him. But this one thing I might not omit, that his Majesty should profess, howsoever he lived among Puritans, and was kept for the most

published as the Conference at Hampton Court was to our prejudice, and none durst contradict it."

But there is other reason for thinking that Barlow's account, so far as it states the facts, is substantially true. The Puritans had a weaker case than they thought, and they were very badly used.

> part as a ward under them, yet, since he was the age of his son, ten years old, he ever disliked their opinions, as the Saviour of the world said, 'Though He lived among them, He was not of them.'"

The first contact between the parties showed the Puritans what they must expect. Bancroft (to use Dr. Gardiner's strong but not excessive phrase) "overstepped all the bounds of decency." Dr. Reynolds, the leader of the Puritans, had pointed out what he supposed to be a contradiction between the language of the 25th Article and that of the Confirmation service, and "desired that both the contradiction might be considered and this ground of Confirmation examined." Now on this point of Confirmation the neo-Episcopalians were more than commonly sensitive, for, on the one hand, their case was exceptionally weak, and, on the other hand, their claim was exceptionally high. Moreover, Confirmation being the one point at which the Episcopalian theory entered directly into the working of the parishes, it came home directly to both parties in the very controversy in which Bancroft had been the episcopalian protagonist. Barlow thus describes the scene:—

> "Thus far Dr. Reynolds went on without any interruption; but here, as he was proceeding, the Bishop of London, much moved to hear these men, who some of them the evening before, and the same morning, had made semblance of joining with the Bishops, and that they sought for nothing but unity, now strike to overthrow, if they could, all at once, cut him off, and kneeling down most humbly desired his Majesty, first, That the ancient canon might be remembered, which saith, that *Schismatici contra episcopos non sunt audiendi.* Secondly, that if any

of these parties were in the number of the thousand ministers, who had once subscribed to the Communion Book, and yet had lately exhibited a petition to his Majesty against it, they might be removed and not heard, according to the decree of a very ancient Council providing that no man should be admitted to speak against that whereto he had formerly subscribed. Thirdly, he put Dr. Reynolds and his associates in mind, how much they were bound to his Majesty's exceeding great clemency, in that they were permitted, contrary to the Statute 1 Eliz., to speak so freely against the Liturgy and Discipline established. Lastly, forasmuch as that he perceived they took a course tending to the utter overthrow of the orders of the Church, thus long continued, he desired to know the end which they aimed at, alleging a place out of Mr. Cartwright, affirming that we ought rather to conform ourselves in orders and ceremonies to the fashion of the Turks, than to the Papists; which position he doubted they approved, because contrary to the orders of the Universities, they appeared before his Majesty in Turkey gowns, not in their scholastical habits, sorting to their degrees."

James rebuked "the insolent vulgarity of this specimen of episcopal wit," but even in doing so, he made it clear that he shared the Bishop's resentment against what he called "traducing the present well-settled Church government." The importance of this episode, and the reason why it is here produced, are its value in throwing light on the mind of the true author of the Canons of 1604, and the confirmation it provides for the whole thesis of this paper—viz., that those Canons were from the first the creatures and instruments of an ecclesiastical faction.

We may sum up the story of this melancholy display of intolerance and servility by quoting Dr. Gardiner's conclusions:

"The conference was at an end. Browbeaten by the Bishops, and rebuked in no measured or decorous language by James, the defenders of an apparently hopeless cause

went back to their labours, to struggle on as best they might. Yet to them the cause they defended was not hopeless, for no doubt ever crossed their minds that it was the cause of God, and it would have seemed blasphemy to them to doubt that that cause would ultimately prevail. Nor were they deprived of human consolation; many hearts would sympathize with them in their wrongs; many a man who cared nothing for minute points of doctrine and ritual, and who was quite satisfied with the service as he had been accustomed to join in it at his parish church, would feel his heart swell with indignation when he heard that men whose fame for learning and piety was unsurpassed by that of any Bishop on the bench, had been treated with cool contempt by men who were prepared to use their wit to defend every abuse, and to hinder all reform."

The Episcopalian victory was registered in the proceedings of the Convocation; the defeated Puritans henceforth turned to the Parliament.

V. The House of Commons.

It is important to keep in mind the fact that the House of Commons which met in March, 1604, was a thoroughly representative assembly, and that in no respect was its representative character more unquestionable than in its attitude towards religious questions.[1] Both members and constituents were communicant members of the National Church. Puritanism had hardly yet dreamed of becoming Dissent. In this year the number of communicants was officially returned at over 2,250,000 out of a population which can hardly have reached 5,000,000. The number of Romish recusants was returned at

[1] See on this point, Gardiner, *History of England*, vol. I., p. 159 f.

less than 9,000. It is not without interest to the modern Churchman that the actual number of the communicants now returned by the Church Year Book is but little over 2,000,000 still, although the population of the country has increased to over 32,000,000 in the interval. Of course it is to be remembered that in the XVIIth century every citizen above the age of sixteen was legally required to communicate, but even this circumstance cannot wholly destroy the impression of the fact, that practically the entire adult population was in full communion with the Established Church. It is literally the case that a conflict between the Convocation and the House of Commons really was what it seemed to be, a conflict of the clergy against the laity within the National Church. If we find that the proceedings of the Hampton Court Conference were profoundly disapproved in Parliament, that the Canons of 1604 were energetically protested against, that a solemn affirmation of the ecclesiastical authority of the House of Commons was made in response to the self-regarding claims of the Convocation, we cannot escape from the conclusion, that the Jacobean settlement of the Church had behind it no sanction of the general conscience, that it was seen at the time to be, what in retrospect it manifestly appears to have been, an unscrupulous partizan triumph. And there is a deeper question involved. If the Church of Christ, and any true part of that Church, be indeed composed of the society of faithful men,[1]

[1] Bishop Paget places his finger on the root of nine-tenths of our ecclesiastical blunders when he writes thus :—" Few words perhaps are used

then it cannot really be the case that the decisions of some small section of the number, whether clerical or lay, can be rightly clothed with the august authority which would properly attach to the deliberate expression of the general mind. Yet this is precisely what is done when the Canons of 1604 are appealed to as "the law of the Church" in some mysteriously sacred sense which makes it morally wrong for a Churchman to disobey them, though the Statutes of the Realm have disallowed their provisions. It actually appears to be held in some exalted quarters that the question whether the 99th Canon does, or does not, affirm true doctrine depends on the point, whether Convocation shall, or shall not, abrogate it! It is impossible to conceive a grosser and more demoralizing confusion of mind and conscience than such an attitude implies. But to return to the point before us.

The House of Commons was not only conformist, but it was also averse to the extreme proposals of the Puritans. Even the Parliament which assembled in 1640, though far more bitter in its anti-hierarchical sentiment, and undoubtedly more Puritan in its convictions, had not (until the course of events seemed to compel another method) any hostility to Episcopal government as such.[1] In 1604 it is fairly certain that

more loosely and uncertainly than the word Church; few words stand more often in sentences which men would have to reconsider and perhaps recast if they thought out definitely what they mean?" *v. l.c.*, p. 106. For illustrations of this see the recent Episcopal pronouncements on the new Marriage Act *passim*.

[1] See Shaw, *History of the English Church during the Civil Wars and under the Commonwealth*, ch. i., for an excellent analysis of the Parliamentary opinion on the church question in 1640. [London, 1900.]

the members were at least as far removed from any agreement with Presbyterian notions of Church polity as they were from the neo-Episcopalianism of Bancroft.

On June 20th, 1604, the House of Commons drew up a notable document, the Apology for their proceedings. Even Mr. Frere describes it as a "noble apology," although he naturally belittles its ecclesiastical importance. It is very fully quoted in Dr. Gardiner's History, and we may confine ourselves here to its references to the religious situation. The Commons complain that "some of the clergy had been preaching against them, and had even published their protestations against the undoubted right of the House to deal with ecclesiastical affairs." They carefully repudiate the doctrine of the newly-issued canons as to the King's Supremacy.

> "For matter of religion," they said, "it will appear, by examination of the truth and right, that your Majesty should be misinformed if any man should deliver that the Kings of England have any absolute power in themselves either to alter religion (which God forfend should be in the power of any mortal man whatsoever), or *to make any laws concerning the same, otherwise than in temporal causes by consent of Parliament.* We have and shall at all times by our oaths acknowledge that your Majesty is sovereign lord and supreme governor in both. Touching our own desires and proceedings therein, they have been not a little misconceived and misinterpreted. We have not come in any Puritan or Brownist spirit to introduce their parity, or to work the subversion of the State ecclesiastical as now it stands . . . we disputed not of matters of faith and doctrine, our desire was peace only, and our device of unity, how this lamentable and long-lasting dissension amongst the ministers (from which both atheism, sects, and ill-life have received such encouragement, and so dangerous increase) might at length, before help comes too late, be extinguished. . . .

> Neither desire we so much that any man, in regard of weakness of conscience, may be exempted after Parliament from obedience to laws established, as that in this Parliament such laws may be enacted as by relinquishment of some few ceremonies of small importance, or by any way better, a perpetual uniformity may be enjoined and observed."

"To understand this apology," says Dr. Gardiner, "is to understand the causes of the success of the English Revolution." We may add that it is also to understand the causes of the failure of Bancroft's ecclesiastical experiment. "If the Church was to cease to be comprehensive it must become tolerant." James I. and Bancroft decided that it should be neither. Hence within a generation came the violent destruction of the whole hierarchical system together with the Monarchy itself; and hence, when both had been restored, came the permanent divisions of English religion.

VI. The Canons of 1604.

"Take this as the result thereof," says Fuller after stating that the Convocation met, and that he had not been able to get access to the reports of its sessions, "a book of Canons was compiled, not only being a sum of the queen's articles, orders of her commissioners, advertisements, canons of 1571 and 1597, which were in use before; but also many more were added, the whole number amounting unto one hundred and forty-one. Some wise and moderate men supposed so many laws were too heavy a burden to be long borne, and that it had been enough for the episcopal party to have triumphed,

not insulted over their adversaries in so numerous impositions." This is no unfair description of the code which Bancroft, as acting-President of the Canterbury Convocation, carried quickly through the Houses. That code left no way of escape to the conscientious Puritan. One canon will suffice to show its thorough-going character. In view of the fact that the House of Commons was actually declaring for alterations in the Church system, and remembering that the whole Puritan party including a powerful section of the clergy and probably a majority of the religious laity had just been agitating for certain changes, it is not difficult to appreciate the 4th canon:

> "Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, that the form of God's worship in the Church of England, established by law, and contained in the Book of Common Prayer and Administration of Sacraments, is a corrupt, superstitious, or unlawful worship of God, or containeth anything in it that is repugnant to the Scriptures; let him be excommunicated *ipso facto*, and not restored, but by the bishop of the place, or archbishop, after his repentance, and public revocation of such his wicked errors."

In December Bancroft became Archbishop of Canterbury, and at once set himself to enforce the new code. Within a few weeks some 300 Puritan clergy had been ejected. The vigour of the new Primate was applauded by the King, and by the more vehement partizans on his own side. The Laudians at a later stage were wont to affirm that if but the Bancroft policy had been continued by his successor all would have been well, but that the vacillation of the leaders threw all into confusion.

Heylyn describes with enthusiasm the change for the better which passed over the aspect of the country:

> "Hereupon followed a great alteration in the face of religion; more churches beautified and repaired in the short time of his (Bancroft's) government than had been in many years before; the fasts and festivals more punctually observed by both than of later times. Copes brought again into the service of the church, the surplice generally worne without doubt or hesitency."[1]

It reads like a modern account of the "Oxford Movement," and is about as truthful. What the dominant clerical faction could not see was, that they had gained a free hand in the churches by alienating serious Englishmen from the Church, and that all the petty ceremonial advances, which they had so pleased themselves in making, would not count for much when the chalice of national provocation had been over-filled, and there was war in the gate. It is the hardest and most necessary lesson for clergymen to learn that nothing can possibly take the place of the public confidence; and perhaps the High Church faction, both in the seventeenth century and in the twentieth, has been pre-eminently slow in learning it.

[1] *v. History of the Presbyterians*, p. 376. Oxford, 1670.

XII

ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON[1]

ROBERT LEIGHTON was born in 1611, and died in 1684. His lifetime fills a notable epoch in the history of the English people. In the year of his birth the Authorized Version of the English Bible issued from the press; in the year of his death the most distinguished of English thinkers, John Locke, was expelled from Oxford for political opinions, which, within four years, were to be the common-places of English politics. He may be said to have been reared in conflict. His father, Alexander Leighton, was one of the martyrs of English Presbyterianism, and had endured penalties so barbarous that they shocked the conscience of the time, and cannot be excused even by the extravagant fanaticism of the writings which provoked them. In spite, however, of his fanaticism, the author of *Sion's Plea Against Prelacy* seems to have been an amiable and estimable person who "was never heard to speak of his persecutors but in terms of compassion and forgiveness." The horrible sentence

[1] A Lecture delivered in All Saints' Church, Ennismore Gardens, on Wednesday, March 20th, 1907.

of the Star Chamber was carried out in 1630, when Robert was pursuing his studies at the University of Edinburgh, and for ten years afterwards he remained in prison, until the advent of the Long Parliament effected a gaol-delivery of the opponents of the Government. Most part of that time was spent by the future Archbishop abroad, where were laid the foundations of that exceptional breadth of religious culture which marks his writings. He is said to have been often at Douay, where he had relatives, and was brought into familiar relations with Roman Catholic ecclesiastics. "He was also greatly attracted by the piety of the Jansenists, and his intercourse with them gave a permanent colouring to his religious character." His father's liberation was soon followed by his return to Scotland, and ordination by the presbytery of Dalkeith (December 16th, 1641). He was immediately inducted to the parish of Newbattle, where he quickly attained distinction as a preacher of a new and excellent type. His acquaintance with continental models had taught him the value of short sermons, delivered without MS., and his own exquisite taste enabled him to give to his ideas the most finished literary expression. He was of an accommodating disposition, and appears to have conformed without hesitation to the demands of authority, subscribing in succession both the national covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant. In 1653, he resigned his charge of Newbattle, and was immediately appointed to the more congenial position of Principal of Edinburgh University. The next nine years were the most successful of his life, and his

influence both on students and townsfolk was deep and salutary. With the Restoration came the renewal of the old Laudian policy of episcopalizing the Scottish Church, and Leighton was marked out by the Government as a suitable agent, likely to commend the process by character and gentleness. His appointment to the bishopric of Dunblane is said to have been owing to the application of his brother, Sir Elisha Leighton, who had embraced the Roman Catholic faith, and was in some favour with the Court of Charles II. Leighton himself manifested the greatest reluctance to accept his promotion, and soon discovered the justice of the apprehensions with which he yielded to the pressure of his friends. From the first he was out of sympathy with his Episcopal colleagues and his civil superiors. The lavish feast, which according to wont followed the consecration in Westminster Abbey, troubled his ascetic conscience, and on his approach to Edinburgh he refused to join in the public entrance, which had been arranged for the new bishops, nor would he suffer himself to be addressed as "My Lord." In connection with his consecration Leighton made one of the few serious errors of his life. He and Sharp were in presbyterian orders, and, if Jacobean precedent had been followed, they would not have been required to receive re-ordination to the presbyterate. Sharp objected with energy against the indignity of re-ordination, but he was not fairly seconded by Leighton, who "professed to regard the second ordination as 'cumulative, not primitive,' and as a thing of so little moment that he was willing to be re-ordained, not once merely, but once a year."

Mr. Mathieson's observations on this episode are not too severe :—

> "The English prelates, as Leighton very well knew, imagined that they were giving him something which he had hitherto been without ; and thus, by countenancing the monstrous absurdity, which he entirely disbelieved, that there could be no valid ministry without Bishops, he threw a fresh and most formidable obstacle in the way of that union of Episcopalians and Presbyterians which he was so anxious to promote."[1]

On September 15th, 1662, Leighton met the synod of his diocese, and addressed to them his primary charge. This has been preserved in the synod-book, and is a very characteristic composition. It reveals his desire to promote a higher devotional standard in the Church by introducing the main elements of liturgical worship, his deep dislike of the prevailing habit of controversial preaching, and his ardent ambition for religious peace. The direction on preaching has a special interest, as describing his own method in the pulpit :—

> "That preaching be plain and useful for all capacities ; not entangled with useless questions and disputes, nor continued to a wearisome length ; the great and most necessary principles of religion most frequently treated upon ; and oftentimes larger portions of Scripture explained, and suitable instructions and exhortations thence deduced ; and let that be the sermon at that time ; which

[1] *Politics and Religion in Scotland*, vol. II., p. 288.
Burnet's account of Leighton's views on the subject of episcopacy should be read, *v. History of his own Time*, vol. I., p. 251 f. Kirkton describes Leighton as "a man of good learning, excellent utterance, and very grave abstract conversation, but *almost altogether destitute of a doctrinal principle, being almost indifferent among all the professions that are called by the name of Christ.*" A very sad state of mind from the Covenanter's point of view !

> will doubtless be as truly preaching and as useful, if not more so, than insisting for a whole sermon or more upon one short verse or sentence."

He implored the clergy, who, however, listened to him with hardly-dissembled disapproval, to "endeavour rather to quench than to increase the useless debates and contentions that abound in the world; and that they be always more studious of pacific than polemic divinity, that certainly being much diviner than this, for the students of it are called the sons of God."

The clergy whom thus he addressed were men of a narrow creed, of vehement prejudices, and of polemical habit, and filled with just exasperation by the oppressive policy of the Government. Leighton seemed in their eyes to be adding craft to cruelty, when he pleaded for mutual consideration, and at the same time attempted to carry out the ruthless orders of his superiors. Three years sufficed to disgust him with the position, and on October 11th, 1665 he delivered to his clergy a Farewell Address. The entry in the synod-book stands thus :—

> "After the affairs of the Synod were ended, the Bishop shewed the brethren he had somewhat to impart to them that concerned himself, which, though it imported little or nothing, either to them or the Church, yet he judged it his duty to acquaint them with; and it was the resolution he had taken of retiring from this public charge; and that all the account he could give of the reasons moving him to it was briefly this: the sense he had of his own unworthiness of so high a station in the Church, and his weariness of the contentions of this Church, which seemed to be rather growing than abating, and by their growth did make so great abatements of that Christian meekness and mutual charity, that is so much more worth than the whole sum of all that we contend about."

The Bishop went up to London and placed his resignation in the King's hands, telling him plainly that he disapproved of the violent measures against the presbyterians, and "that he could not concur in the planting of the Christian religion itself in such a manner, much less a form of government." Charles, however, who knew Leighton's value, would not accept the resignation, and induced him to recall it by assurances, that he (the King) had made up his mind to adopt a milder course. Accordingly the Bishop returned to his diocese, and took up again the difficult burden of its administration. On October, 9th, 1666, the synod-book records another charge, in which he again insists on his peculiar views as to preaching, and rebukes the popular presbyterian practice of substituting lectures for the reading of the Lessons.

> "If the minister think fit to make his sermon for the time upon some part of what, by himself or by his appointment, hath been read, it may do well; and possibly so much the better the longer the text be and the shorter the sermon be; for it is greatly to be suspected that our usual way of very short texts and very long sermons is apt to weary people more and profit them less.
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> "But whatsoever they do in this, they should beware of returning to their long expositions besides their sermon at one and the same meeting; which, besides the tediousness and other inconveniences, is apt to foment in people's minds the foolish prejudice and proud disdain they have taken against the Scriptures read without a super-added discourse; in which conceit, for all their zeal against Popery, they seem to be too much of the Romish opinion as accounting the Holy Scriptures so obscure in themselves that it is someway dangerous, or at least altogether unprofitable, to intrust the common people either with reading or hearing any part of them at any time, unless they be backed by continual expositions."

In 1669 Archbishop Burnet, of Glasgow, who had shown himself unwilling to assist the conciliatory policy which the Government had resolved to adopt, was compelled to resign, and his vacant see was bestowed on Leighton, who, after some opposition, consented to accept the task of administering it in addition to his own. He found himself in an unenviable situation, suspected both by the episcopalian clergy, who hated his peace-making efforts, and by their presbyterian rivals, who doubted alike his orthodoxy and his sincerity. However, he laboured in a series of conferences to arrange some agreement, mitigating the episcopal system by the introduction of synods, much as at an earlier time Archbishop Ussher had attempted in England. In order to reconcile the people to some accommodation, he sent out six episcopalian divines on a preaching tour in the west of Scotland. Among these was the most ardent and best known of his disciples, the pushing and eloquent, but affectionate and honest, Gilbert Burnet.

The impression made on the Scottish people by the episcopalian missioners may be sufficiently collected from the narrative of the bitter but thoroughly representative Kirkton. After stating that the covenanting ministers "were attended with a sort of rivals, whom our governours sent west to darken their ministry by the excellency of their gifts," he proceeds to the following description of the new preachers whom "the country people called in a mock the bishop's evangelists":

> "The men were, Mr. James Nairn, their paragon, a man of gifts, but much suspected as unsound; Mr. Gilbert

> Burnet . . . a man more disdained in the west countrey than followed at London, for tho' he speaks the newest English diction, he spoke never the language of ane exercised conscience. Another was Mr. Lawrence Charters, a silent grave man, but most unfitt to make countrey proselytes because of his very cold utterance, men wondered he should have undertaken it; then Mr. James Aird, commonly called Mr. Lighton's ape, because he could imitate his shrugge and grimache, but never more of him; Mr. Patrick Cook, so ordinary man I have nothing to say of him; and Mr. Walter Paterson, a man so obscure I never heard of him. The harvest they reapt was scorn and contempt; a congregation they could never gather, they never pretended to have made a proselyte. In some places some few went to hear them for once, and that was all; in some places they baracado'd the doors upon them, in some places stole the rope, in some places the tongue from the bell; so they quickly wearied of this foolish employment."

Burnet gives a less unflattering account of the reception which he and his colleagues obtained from the people, but it is clear even from his narrative that their mission was a failure. There is a curious interest in his description of the controversial ability of the Scottish peasantry.

> "The people of the country came generally to hear us, though not in great crowds. We were indeed amazed to see a poor commonalty so capable to argue upon points of government, and on the bounds to be set to the power of princes in matters of religion; upon all these topics they had texts of Scripture at hand; and were ready with their answers to anything that was said to them. This measure of knowledge was spread even among the meanest of them, their cottagers and their servants. They were indeed vain of their knowledge, much conceited of themselves, and were full of a most entangled scrupulosity; so that they found, or made, difficulties in everything that could be laid before them. We stayed about three months in the country: and

[1] *v.* The secret and true history of the Church of Scotland from the Restoration to the year 1678 by the Rev. James Kirkton, p. 293. Edinburgh, 1817.

> in that time there was a stand in the frequency of conventicles. But, as soon as we were gone, a set of those hot preachers went round all the places in which we had been, to defeat all the good we could hope to do. They told them the Devil was never so formidable, as when he was transformed into an angel of light."

All was in vain: the nonconforming clergy were in agreement to resist all proposals of peace, which did not give complete victory to themselves, and the Archbishop gained nothing from his labours but a fresh crop of insult and suspicion. It has been pointed out that he himself was "perhaps the most serious obstacle to the success of the Accommodation," for it had happened in his case, what commonly happens in the case of peace-loving men in times of controversy, that he was the best-hated man of all on both sides.

> "Sir George Mackenzie has justly observed that Leighton was more hated by the Presbyterians than any other Bishop, 'in respect he drew many into a kindness for Episcopacy by his exemplary life rather than debates'; and apart from this cause of jealousy, he was much suspected as popish, monastic, lukewarm, latitudinarian, and 'unsound.'"

There is a suggestive closeness in the parallel between the efforts which Leighton and his friends were making in Scotland to secure an "accommodation" with the presbyterians, and the similar efforts which the latitudinarians were making in England to effect a "comprehension" with the nonconformists. Both efforts failed before the same combination of opponents. On the weaker side, the bitter prejudices born of ignorance and persecution; on the stronger

[1] *v. History of his own Time*, vol. I., p. 535. Oxford, 1833.

side, the insolence of power, and the fatal barrier of an ecclesiastical theory equally exclusive, arrogant, and false. In their ardour for religious peace, the candour and simplicity of their minds, and the just indifference with which they regarded petty issues, Leighton and Baxter were curiously alike, and both had the fatal disqualification for effecting the objects they had at heart, that they could neither understand nor allow for the fierce intolerance and indiscriminating zeal of lesser men. "If," wrote the Archbishop, "we love both our own and the Church's peace, there be two things, I conceive, we should most carefully avoid, the bestowing of too great zeal upon small things and too much confidence of opinion upon doubtful things. It is a mad thing to rush on hard and boldly in the dark, and we all know what kind of person it is of whom Solomon says that he rages and is confident."

The failure of his efforts renewed Leighton's desire to retire from his office: he was weary beyond endurance with contentions, which he contemptuously described as no better than "a quarrel d'Alman or a drunken scuffle in the dark"; and after many applications he was at last, in 1674, allowed to resign. He lived yet for ten years, at first in Edinburgh, and then at Horsted Keynes in Sussex. His death took place on June 25, 1684, in the Bell Inn, Warwick Lane, on a visit to London. He had been accustomed to express a wish to die in an inn—"it looking like a pilgrim going home." Burnet, the most devoted of his disciples, was with him at the end, and in his arms he breathed his last.

Estimates have varied greatly as to the practical consequences of Leighton's labours as a peace-maker. Bishop Charles Wordsworth, his successor in the See of Dunblane, strongly blamed him for pusillanimity in retiring from a position, where his presence was much needed; but this censure hardly seems justified. There is no reason for thinking that anything could have been attained against the bigotry of presbyterians on the one hand, and the settled habit and purpose of despotic government in Church and State on the other. Mr. Mathieson, whose account of the Archbishop is marked by discrimination, insight, and sympathy, ascribes to him a large and far-reaching influence on the subsequent course of Scottish ecclesiastical life:—

> "Certainly no man had yet appeared in Scotland who combined so tolerant a spirit with such depth and intensity of devotional feeling; and thus, despite the effacement of Bishops, whose withdrawal he had so coolly contemplated as a possible gain, uniting in religion, as Montrose had united in politics, the two great traditions of intelligence and zeal, Leighton must be acknowledged to have founded anew, after it had been dissipated by the storms of the Covenant, that great body of pious, liberal, and enlightened opinion, which in the face both of Episcopal and of ultra-Presbyterian secessions, has adhered to its golden rule: 'The mode of Church government is immaterial, but peace and concord, kindness and goodwill, are indispensable.'"[1]

Of the man himself there has never been any difference of opinion among later students of his life and writings. At the close of his Treatise, *Of the Pastoral Care*, Bishop Burnet sets down his judgment of Leighton, and it must always take the first

[1] *L.c.* p. 256.

place in any collection of judgments on the Archbishop's character:—

> "I have now laid together with great simplicity what has been the chief subject of my thoughts for above thirty years. I was formed to them by a Bishop that had the greatest elevation of soul, the largest compass of knowledge, the most mortified and most heavenly disposition that I ever yet saw in mortal; that had the greatest parts as well as virtues, with the perfectest humility that I ever saw in man; and had a sublime strain in preaching, with so grave a gesture and such a majesty both of thought, of language, and of pronunciation, that I never once saw a wandering eye where he preached; and have seen whole assemblies often melt in tears before him; and of whom I can say with great truth, that in a free and frequent conversation with him, for above two-and-twenty years, I never knew him say an idle word that had not a direct tendency to edification; and I never once saw him in any other temper but that which I wished to be in in the last minutes of my life. For that pattern which I saw in him, I know how much I have to answer to God; and though my reflecting on that which I knew in him gives me just cause of being deeply humbled in myself and before God; yet I feel no more sensible pleasure in anything than in going over in my thoughts all that I saw and observed in him."[1]

In a Pastoral Letter written in 1671, Leighton makes a short personal confession, which might be accepted as the just summary of his religious attitude:—

> "But"—he addresses his clergy—"you will possibly say, What does he himself that speaks these things unto us? Alas! I am ashamed to tell you. All I dare say is this: I think I see the beauty of Holiness and am enamoured with it, though I attain it not; and how little soever I attain, would rather live and die in the pursuit of it, than in the pursuit, yea, or in the possession and enjoyment, though unpursued, of all the advantages that this world offers."

[1] *Cf. History of his own Time*, vol. I., p. 242 *f.*, where Burnet writes with much enthusiasm in the same strain of revering eulogy.

Alexander Knox, writing to Mrs. Hannah More, contrasts the state of religious feeling in the primitive Church, and among Protestants, and finds in the former a great superiority. "There was a primitive excellence in the Christian Church," he says, "a sublimity, as well as simplicity of piety; in which, without any puzzle of the head, there was a seraphic glow of heart, a fire of divine love without the smoke of dark dogmas." This "pure essence of religion," he continues, "is blessedly enshrined in our Liturgy, like the pot of manna in the tabernacle." He can find it in Jeremy Taylor alone among Anglican writers. Leighton has the spirit in all its primitive ardency, only in his case "we see it through a vehicle which disguises it—the Calvinistic theology, which lessened the clearness of his understanding, though it could not repress the fire of his heart, nor affect the native sweetness of his soul."[1] There is an element of truth in this criticism, but it surely goes astray when it suggests a spiritual superiority in Jeremy Taylor. There was no trace in Leighton of the artificial and rhetorical element, which detracts from the moral impressiveness of Taylor's writings, nor could the author of the *Ductor Dubitantium* be ranked with the sublimely simple moralists to whom Leighton assuredly belongs. Elsewhere Knox sets together the "two transcendent men, Baxter and Leighton," to whose influence he attributes his own advance in Evangelical religion. "In the first of whom, I think," he says, "there is the soundest divinity and in the latter the deepest piety that has appeared since the

[1] *Remains*, vol. III., p. 108.

apostolic age."[1] In some respects, indeed, these excellent men were very different. Baxter was the most prolific writer of his age, and it was an age of prolific writers. He was the most controversial of the men of his time, and it was a time of controversy. Leighton "printed nothing during his life-time, and gave directions that his manuscripts should not be published"; and his dislike of controversy was so great that it drove him out of public life in a few years. Baxter was the most slovenly of writers; Leighton the most fastidious. Both were anachronisms in the XVIIth century. The English Puritan was in temper of mind a mediæval schoolman; the Scotch Latitudinarian would have been at home in a mediæval monastery. The points of agreement between men so different lie wholly in the religious sphere. Both were steeped in the evangelical spirit; both were genuinely enamoured of the life to come; both had a catholic charity, and that truly pastoral spirit, which makes men feel as personal shames and losses the scandals and afflictions of the Christian society. In the voluminous writings of Baxter I cannot recall a sentence, which can fairly be said to indicate any sense of the humorous, or any consciousness of the grotesque, but Leighton's writings are everywhere penetrated with a sweet whimsical humour, and the stories which have come down to us of his habits and sayings are suggestive of a rare and kindly wit. His habits were those of a monk, and he was conscious of the fact.

> "He never married, he gave away all but a fraction of his income in charity, he fasted three times a week, he

[1] *Remains*, vol. IV., p. 158.

talked of being 'condemned' to dine; and a story is told of him, that when Principal of the University of Edinburgh, he used often to retire with his Bible and some bread and ale, which he scarcely tasted, to a solitary chamber, telling his servant not to disturb him for forty-eight hours, and if he died before that time, to see that he had Christian burial." [1]

Leighton was wont to charge himself with indulging in "spiritual sensuality," but he had a healthy directness of mind, which preserved him from self-delusion, and from many practical errors, into which men of his type are apt to fall. "I prefer an erroneous honest man," he once said, "before the most orthodox knave in the world." "His sister once asked him, at the request of a friend, what he conceived to be the Beast in the Apocalypse, adding, 'I told the enquirer that you would certainly answer you could not tell.' 'Truly,' replied Leighton 'you said well; but, if I might fancy what it were, it would be something with a pair of horns that pusheth his neighbour; as hath been so much seen and practised in Church and State.'"

The unpardonable sin in his eyes was the persecuting intolerance which then passed for Christian zeal. Presbyterians were guilty enough in this particular, but their guilt was innocence beside the settled and ruthless cruelty of Rome. Accordingly, in spite of his ascetical habits and his admiration for the devotional works of Roman Catholic writers, he regarded the Church of Rome with profound distrust, which deepened into hostility as he observed the efforts made to advance Romanism in England during

[1] Mathieson, *l.c.*, p. 222.

the latter years of Charles II. Burnet records the change of his sentiments:—

> "He was in his last years turned to a greater severity against popery than I had imagined a man of his temper and of his largeness in point of opinion was capable of. He spoke of the corruptions, of the secular spirit, and of the cruelty that appeared in that Church with an extraordinary concern; and lamented the shameful advances that we seemed to be making towards popery."

Both Baxter and Leighton were men of slight build and delicate appearance, though there is no evidence that Leighton had any experience of such physical distresses as filled so large a place in Baxter's life.

Dean Plumptre has noted in Leighton "a strong resemblance to Ken":—

> "Like Ken, he chose the celibate and contemplative life. Like him, he delighted in the study of mystical and ascetic writers, and drew largely not only from the 'Imitation of Christ,' but from the other works of Thomas à Kempis. Like him, he held it to be essential to the efficiency of a preacher that he should speak and not read his sermons. Like him, he was suspected of being a Papist in disguise."[1]

Both the Latitudinarian and the Non-juror were men of a wide charity, and a shrewd kindly humour. It is recorded of Leighton that he once went to visit a sick Presbyterian minister on a horse, which he had borrowed from a Roman Catholic priest. Leighton was, however, free from Ken's narrow ecclesiasticism.

Leighton has been called not unfitly "our Scottish Fénelon"; and we might apply to him the language which Dean Church applies to the famous French mystic. Change the names, and read Anglican for

[1] *Thomas Ken*, vol. I., p. 130.

Roman Catholic, and the following will serve well enough for a description of Leighton :—

> "Fénelon's words were music such as the devotion of the time thought it had never heard equalled. Fénelon was far indeed from being the greatest, but he was the most accomplished and most attractive example of the Roman Catholic religion of his age. He combined the strictest faith in dogmas, the most profound submission to authority, the most genuine devotional temper, and an absorbing and governing zeal, with the benevolence, the high spirit, the tolerant generosity, the polish and courtesy and largeness of mind, of which society was beginning to recognize the value and the grace." [1]

Nonconformists have been as enthusiastic as Anglicans in their eulogies of Leighton. Doddridge, in his preface to Jerment's edition of Leighton's *Works*, quotes and endorses the following opinion of Dr. Henry Miles, a well-known dissenting preacher and writer on scientific subjects :—

> "There is a spirit in Archbishop Leighton I never met with in any human writings, nor can I read many lines in them without being moved." "Indeed" (adds Doddridge), "it would be difficult for me to say where, but in the sacred oracles, I have ever found such heart-affecting lessons of simplicity and humility, candour and benevolence, exalted piety without the least tincture of enthusiasm, and an entire mortification to every earthly interest, without any mixture of splenetic resentment."

He comments very justly on the admirable simplicity of Leighton's style :—

> "On the whole, the style wonderfully suits the sentiments ; and however destitute of the flights of oratory, has such a dignity and force mingled with that simplicity, which is, to be sure, its chief characteristic ; so that on the

[1] *Occasional Papers*, vol. I., p. 292.

> whole it has often reminded me of that soft and sweet eloquence of Ulysses, which Homer describes as falling like flakes of snow; and if I might be allowed to pursue the similitude, I could add: like that, it penetrates deep into the mind too, and tends to enrich and fructify it."

Doddridge wrote thus in 1748, delighted to show "that a diversity of judgment, with regard to episcopacy, and several forms both of discipline and worship connected with it, had produced in his mind no alienation, no indifference towards Archbishop Leighton, nor prevented his delighting in his works, and profiting by them." Nearly fifty years later, in 1791, the famous Baptist preacher, Robert Hall, writes to a correspondent, advising the study of Leighton's works, and adding this enthusiastic opinion:—

> "Full of the richest imagery, and breathing a spirit of the most sublime and unaffected devotion, the reading him is a truce to all human cares and human passions; and I can compare it to nothing, but the beautiful representation in the twenty-third psalm—it is like 'lying down in green pastures, and by the side of still waters.'"[1]

It would be easy to multiply such eulogies; the impressive circumstance is, that to the modern student of the Archbishop's writings they do not seem extravagant or unreal. Coleridge's enthusiasm is well known. To his thinking, Leighton was as "Plato glorified by St. Paul," and when he wrote his *Aids to Reflection* he made Leighton's teaching the basis of his own. With the philosopher's appreciation of the Saint we may well bring our lecture to an end.

Leighton, he said, "perhaps of all our learned

[1] *Works*, vol. V., p. 412.

Protestant theologians best deserves the title of a spiritual divine"; his "philosophic and richly-gifted mind, amply stored with all the knowledge that books and long intercourse with men of the most discordant characters could give, under the convictions, impressions, and habits of a spiritual religion," was the best instrument that could be found for exhibiting "the Divine portrait itself, the distinct features of its countenance, as a sojourner among men; its benign aspect turned toward its fellow-pilgrims, the extended arm, and the hand that blesseth and healeth."

XIII

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

THE General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has just been holding its sessions in Edinburgh, and by the kindness of the Moderator, Dr. J. Mitford Mitchell, I had the privilege of witnessing some of its proceedings, and these impressed me so much that I propose to put together some account of my observations and reflections.

The assembly is a numerous body including more than 700 members. These are composed of Ministers coming up in rotation from the presbyteries, and Elders elected by the presbyteries. Thus clergy and laity are combined on an absolutely equal footing in the supreme court of the Church. The Moderator is designated by a Committee consisting of the ex-Moderators, and is elected to office by the vote of the Assembly. The Moderatorship is an annual office, and involves its holder in large responsibilities, and extensive hospitality. Indeed, the modest official stipend attached to the office (£400) is altogether inadequate to the customary expenditure, and a

practice has grown up among the congregations whose Ministers are chosen for this costly and honourable office of making a contribution towards the burdens involved.

The Moderator is assisted in the performance of his duties by the legal officials of the Assembly, and the course of business is facilitated by the recognition of a "Leader of the House," a position of the greatest honour and importance, but, like the Premiership, unknown to the law. The Convener of the General Committee of the Church becomes by custom the Leader of the House, and plays in its life much the same part as that played in the House of Commons by the Head of the Government. It is sufficiently obvious that, in so numerous a body as the General Assembly, such a recognized Leader is indispensable.

As the General Assembly is the supreme court of the Established Church of Scotland its proceedings are invested with much state, and directly authorized by the presence of the Lord High Commissioner as representing the Sovereign. The ancient capital of the once independent and always unconquered Kingdom resumes its former pomp; the Palace of Holyrood House is inhabited by the King's Representative, and made the centre of a generous and splendid hospitality. Levées, dinners, receptions, deputations—all the familiar incidents of the Court are crowded into the fortnight of the General Assembly's annual session. Edinburgh is admirably adapted to public spectacles, and, if it had a competent control over the weather, could outshine in splendour more considerable capitals.

In spite of the rain, however, the citizens came out in great numbers to watch the procession from Holyrood to St. Giles' Cathedral, and Lord Kinnaird was welcomed with a hearty cheer, when it was seen that, unlike most of his company, he rode in an open carriage in spite of the elements. After the sermon there followed the formal opening of the proceedings in the Assembly Hall. This was both impressive and interesting. As a mere spectacle the General Assembly on its opening day must take high rank. The hall was crowded with Ministers and Elders, and the gallery was thronged with spectators. At the farthest end sat the Moderator in a raised chair, behind a table at which were gathered the two secretaries, the lawyers, and sundry of the more venerated figures, joined on this occasion by an interested visitor from the sister Church of England. Above in the Royal Gallery sat the Lord High Commissioner backed by the fantastic splendour of the Heralds and Officers, and encircled by a fair company of ladies, maids of honour to her Grace, and invited guests. It was easy to suppose that in all this dominating secular pomp the spirit of Erastianism was supreme, but this notion was effectively destroyed by the actual procedure, and by the carefully chosen language of the Moderator.

The General Assembly constituted itself with the Moderator in the chair, and elected his successor, before the King's Commission and letter were read; and when the new Moderator made answer to the Commissioner, he emphasized, in words familiar and emphatic, the sole Headship of Jesus Christ in the

Church of Scotland. While thus there was no taint of Erastianism in the proceedings, there was an impressive demonstration of the union between Church and State. The signal for beginning business every day was the appearance of the Commissioner on his throne, and his presence symbolized both the distinctness and the co-operation of the two Powers, ecclesiastical and civil.

The next day the General Assembly received the Holy Communion in St. Giles' Cathedral. For the first time in my life I had the felicity of uniting in sacramental fellowship with the Church of Scotland. The profound reverence and solemnity of the Service impressed me greatly. It was at once familiar to me, and novel. There was no preaching, or extemporaneous prayer, but a form of Service was used which included all the substance, and much of the language, of the Communion Office in the Prayer Book. Lessons from both Testaments were read, and psalms, paraphrases, and hymns were sung. This singing, indeed, was a remarkable feature of the service, hearty and yet devotional, as the singing of men who were pouring conviction and purpose into the words they sang. The most original part of the Service was the administration of the elements. This was made by the Elders, and the communicants received the Sacrament in their seats. I had been prepared to believe that this arrangement would displease me as lacking in reverence, but in fact the impression made on me was not at all one of irreverence. The communicants knelt in prayer as soon as they had received the Bread and Wine, and the effect was rather con-

gregational and social than anything else. Throughout the Clergy are subordinate to the Society. Fraternity is the note of the Service, and nothing intervenes between the united family and the Divine Head of the Household of the Faith. Yet the devoutest Anglican will not be dissatisfied with the Sacramental doctrine implicit in the Service, nor will the student of Liturgies have any reason to complain of the arrangement of its parts. This is the Invocation which precedes the Consecration of the elements :—

> "And we most humbly beseech Thee, O merciful Father, to vouchsafe unto us Thy gracious presence, as we do now make that memorial of His most blessed sacrifice which Thy Son hath commanded us to make, and to bless and sanctify with thy Word and Spirit these Thine own gifts of bread and wine which we set before Thee ; that we, receiving them, according to our Saviour's institution, in thankful remembrance of His death and passion, may through the power of the Holy Ghost, be partakers of His body and blood, with all His benefits, to our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace, and the glory of Thy most holy name."

Certainly I have never had the happiness to be present at a more genuinely Christian Service.

For the first two days the business in the Assembly was mainly formal, though not without an interest of its own. A remarkably interesting speech was made by M. Merle D'Aubigné, the representative of the French Protestant Church, but honesty compels me to confess that this speech stood by itself. The Colonial Delegates were excessively lengthy, and appeared to mistake both the character of their audience, and the reason of their own speaking. A

time limit for deputations would be a wholesome addition to the rules of the Assembly, and would save it much valuable time.

When formalities were at last concluded, and serious business was entered upon, it appeared that there were two subjects of exceptional importance to be debated—the question of a new formula of subscription to the Confession of Faith, and the question of Presbyterian Reunion. Both these questions are intrinsically of the utmost gravity, both are urgent, both stir men's consciences profoundly. Both, moreover, were peculiarly interesting to me as having direct relation to those subjects of controversy within the Church of England, which have for some years past engaged my closest attention.

The situation in England is somewhat different from that in Scotland. We have no difficulty with our formula of subscription, which was rendered as elastic as is reasonably possible forty years ago; our difficulty is concerned with the formularies of worship, and these affect the laity as closely and as evidently as they effect the clergy. The Scotch, having no formularies of public worship, are not confronted with any problem so difficult as that which confronts us in the revision of the Prayer Book. Their stumbling-block is the formula of subscription. The present formula runs as follows:—

> "I declare the Confession of Faith, approved by former Assemblies of this Church, and ratified by law in the year 1690, to be the confession of my faith, and I own the doctrine therein contained to be the true doctrine, which I will constantly adhere to. As likewise I own and acknow-

> ledge Presbyterian Church government, as now and for long time settled by law, to be the only government of this Church, and I will submit thereto and concur therewith, and never endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion thereof. As also I will observe that uniformity of worship and of the administration of all public ordinances in this Church, as the same are at present performed and allowed or shall be hereafter declared by the authority of the same."

This formula being included in an Act of Parliament has statutory obligation, and could not be altered without legislation; but this condition has been satisfied by the Act of 1905, which enacted that "the formula of subscription . . . shall be such as may be prescribed by Act of the General Assembly of the said Church with the consent of the majority of the presbyteries thereof." Thus there is no longer any legal obstacle to a revision of the formula, and the General Assembly has a free hand. All the arguments which were urged in the early 'sixties to secure the passing of the Clerical Subscription Act can be urged with even greater effect to secure a revision of the Scottish formula, for 1907 is not quite as 1865, and the Westminster Confession is a more obsolete document than the Thirty-nine Articles.

The course of events in Scotland has forced on public attention the intrinsic absurdity of the ecclesiastical divisions which distract the country. How great that absurdity is could not be better shown than by the admirable speech of Dr. Norman Macleod, to which I had the happiness to listen in the Assembly. I quote a few sentences from the full and accurate report of the *Scotsman*.

> "It was a strange spectacle which was presented to their mind's eye at this very moment. There they met together in their Assembly Hall. Their entrance door was flanked right and left by two other General Assemblies—he did not call them unfriendly General Assemblies, still, two other General Assemblies—meeting so near each other that if it were not for the intervening walls a single voice speaking from where he then stood could easily be heard by everyone. He could imagine an intelligent foreigner to be personally conducted round these Assemblies and he could suppose him say to his guide, philosopher, and friend, 'Pray tell me what is the meaning of this? Are these good people whom I have just seen in their General Assemblies all Protestants?' 'O yes, all Protestants.' 'Are they all Presbyterians?' 'Yes, all Presbyterians.' 'Do they subscribe to the same standards of doctrinal belief?' 'All of them do so.' 'Do they adopt the same forms of worship and government?' 'Oh yes, substantially they do.' 'What then is the meaning of this? Why, in Heaven's name, should there be three General Assemblies?' He did not believe that any Scotsman could give a very satisfactory explanation. But he was perfectly certain of this, that whatever explanation might be offered, the intelligent foreigner would find it to be as incomprehensible as it was before."

Dr. Scott, the Leader of the House, moved a carefully-worded resolution in favour of Presbyterian reunion. The salient paragraph is the following:—

> "In consideration of the important questions still pending solution between the United Free and the Free Churches, the General Assembly refrain from communicating officially with their General Assemblies on the subject of the overtures, but they express their readiness, whenever a suitable opportunity occurs, to confer with them as to how existing evils traceable to our ecclesiastical divisions can be mitigated or removed consistently with the continued recognition of the principle of national religion."

To this resolution Professor Cooper, of Glasgow, moved an alternative, or as we should say in England an amendment, the gist of which was to extend the

project of reunion from the Presbyterian to all the Churches of Scotland, thus bringing into it the Episcopalians. It was very soon apparent that the meaning of this proposal was to bring the question of reunion back to the narrow ground on which it has been discussed *ad nauseam* on both sides of the Tweed, of the validity of Presbyterian Orders, and to abandon the clear and practicable policy of uniting Churches which have no divergence whether of polity or of doctrine. This was brought out in a brilliant speech by Professor Patterson, the gist of which may be gathered from the very compressed report in the *Scotsman*:—

> "Those of them who meant business in this matter felt that to talk about the wider union, which would include Episcopacy, was to introduce an impracticable proposal, and it would tend to discredit the whole movement. Dr. Cooper had been writing to a secular newspaper as if the only question here was whether the Scottish Episcopal Church might conceivably be willing to recognise the orders of the Church of Scotland. There was another very important question which Dr. Cooper had never faced, and that was whether the Church of Scotland would be willing to merge its individuality in the individuality of the Scottish Episcopal Church. He had the utmost veneration and respect for the Church of England, but he also believed that God loved variety, and that this land would be more according to the mind of God if they had in it the two rich, unblended individualities of Episcopacy and Presbyterianism than the merging of their rich, clear-cut, historic individuality in a diluted Episcopacy. They could not get a union with the Episcopalians and also with the Scottish Presbyterians. The two things were incompatible. They could not have both, and he for one would take his stand with that which was masculine and heroic in the traditions of their counrty and go for union with the Presbyterian Churches."

The most influential layman in the assembly, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, spoke to the same effect, and

even Dr. Marshall Lang, whom none can suspect of any unkindness towards Episcopacy, found himself constrained to admit that "union between Presbyterianism and Episcopacy was at present inconceivable." When the vote was taken in a very full House, Professor Cooper mustered less than a score of supporters.

To my thinking the General Assembly acted wisely and Christianly. Reunion is only conceivable on the basis of fundamental Evangelical principles, and just as these become disentangled from lesser things, and recognized in all the Churches as the sole essentials of Christianity, will the divisions of Christianity cease. So long as forms of ecclesiastical polity are elevated into the first place of religious importance, there cannot possibly be a reunion of the Churches. That, when all is said, is the method of Conquest, and it is most effectively used by the Church of Rome. But, let it be agreed that the only circumstance, which can make a variety of ecclesiastical organization sinful, is the degrading of it into a pretext for breaking fellowship, and it becomes immediately clear that such variety is not necessarily contrary to charity, and may even be ministerial to spiritual efficiency. When we reflect on the strongly marked idiosyncrasies of the national temperaments, and the divergent courses of the national histories, we cannot readily suppose that identity of ecclesiastical organization is likely to be advisable or even possible. There is no breach of fraternity in Scottish Christianity being Presbyterian and English Episcopalian, so long as the Covenant of Christian fellowship expressed by Holy Communion

is maintained. The difference only becomes sinful when fellowship in Holy Communion is refused. I cannot see any valid reason why the National Churches of England and Scotland should not be in full communion with one another, welcoming one another's members to the Table of the One Lord, and showing all such courtesies in interchanging pulpits, and joining in common undertakings, as fraternity suggests. I know enough of my own Church to be very sure that such frank and full mutual recognition would be a matter of genuine satisfaction to many of the clergy and to the overwhelming majority of the laity. I cannot doubt, after being welcomed in the pulpits and at the Altars of the Scottish Church, that the heartiest approval would be given to such a Covenant of Fraternity by Scottish Presbyterians. There would be no merging of the individualities of the Churches, but the cleansing of those individualities from the stains of a guilty and unnecessary individualism.

It was inevitable that I should mentally compare the General Assembly with our own Convocation. The comparison is not favourable to the English Synod. Convocation is a much smaller body; it is wholly clerical; it has an obsolete constitution and procedure; it has no powers of action, and necessarily sinks into a mere debating society; it commands no public interest. Whereas the Scottish newspapers fill their columns with the debates of the General Assembly, and devote daily leaders to them, it is rare if the reports of the proceedings in Convocation extend beyond the briefest statement, and a leader is

an event. The speaking is certainly much better in the Assembly than with us, partly, perhaps, because the audience is much larger, and there is a sense of reality in the debates, which is necessarily absent from Convocational business. I never understood before why the English Puritans in Elizabeth's reign were so fascinated by the Presbyterian polity. The contrast is almost that between a mummy and a living man, when one passes from the Convocation of the English, to the General Assembly of the Scottish, Establishment. I can imagine that the first impression would be too favourable. A Presbyterian Church is seen at its best in its representative assemblies, an Episcopalian Church is in that particular at its worst, for the simple reason that Episcopacy is essentially antidemocratic. When every serious question of doctrine and discipline is reserved to a handful of Bishops, there is little left for the mass of the clergy, and nothing at all for the laity to deal with.

Perhaps the thing that impressed me most was the solidarity of the Assembly. There was no latent schism on fundamentals such as marks our clerical assemblies. Professor Cooper gave me for a moment the impression of a Sacerdotalist, and there seemed something familiar in the evident divergence, profound but unuttered, between his point of view and that of the audience which he addressed; but the vote showed that he had no following, and confirmed the general sense of fundamental agreement. The pride with which everyboby seemed to speak of the General Assembly contrasted sharply with the half-

apologetic, half-humorous, language of the ordinary Convocation man. The reason is not perhaps very far to seek. The general Assembly has an unbroken and vigorous life, and remains the one effectively national institution in Scotland. Convocation as it exists to-day is one of the ecclesiastical revivals of triumphant Tractarianism. Its life was interrupted by 150 years of suspended activity, and in that long interval it finally lost its slender hold on the interest and respect of the English nation.

H. H. H.

P.S.—Since the above was written I have learned the result of the adjourned discussion on the Formula of Subscription. On Monday, May 27th, 1907, the General Assembly adopted the following draft to be sent down to presbyteries under the Barrier Act :—

> "I hereby subscribe the Confession of Faith, the public and avowed Confession of this Church, approven by former General Assemblies, as most agreeable to the Word of God, and ratified by Parliament in the year 1690, declaring that I believe the Reformed Faith therein set forth, to which I will adhere."

This was proposed by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, and adopted by 187 votes against 166, recorded in favour of a motion substituting for "the reformed Faith therein set forth," the phrase "the substance of the doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith." It will be interesting to compare the proposed new

formula with that imposed on the English Clergy by the Clerical Subscription Act of 1865 :—

> "I assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, and to the Book of Common Prayer; and of the ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. I believe the doctrine of the Church of England, as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God; and, in public prayer and administration of the Sacraments, I will use the Form in the said book prescribed, and none other, except so far as shall be ordered by lawful authority."

The expression "the Reformed Faith" is presumably to be understood as the "Faith of the Reformed Churches," and thus perpetuates the ancient and valuable assumption that the Reformation proceeded on certain principles, which gave a fundamental harmony to the religion professed under the various systems, ecclesiastical, disciplinary, and liturgical, which replaced the single organization of the unreformed Church.

XIV

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH[1]

THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND BEGAN TO SPEAK WITH OTHER TONGUES, AS THE SPIRIT GAVE THEM UTTERANCE . . .

EVERY MAN HEARD THEM SPEAKING IN HIS OWN LANGUAGE.
Acts ii. 4, 6.

THE narrative of the Pentecostal Advent of the Spirit of God has impressed itself deeply on the literature and art of Christendom. Until recent times no one hesitated to give the most literal interpretation to the language of the sacred historian, but now it would scarcely be excessive to say that all thoughtful and educated students agree that, apart from a theory of verbal inspiration which on other grounds cannot be maintained, the literal interpretation cannot be upheld. In face of the evidences of the New Testament, of Christian history, of intrinsic probability, of fundamental religious principle, we cannot suppose that the Apostolic company were suddenly endowed with a miraculous knowledge of languages other than their own.

[1] Sermon preached on Whitsunday, May 19th, 1907, in St. Margaret's, Westminster.

It is a rule of Anglican interpretation not to expound one place of Scripture so that it be repugnant to another, and this rule can only be applied to conflicting statements of fact by the acceptance of critical canons, which shall disallow the literal character of some scriptural narratives.

If I do not enter at length on the reasons why it is now generally agreed that, whatever else the Pentecostal Gift may have been, it was not in the literal sense of the words what the Proper Preface for Whitsunday calls "the gift of divers languages," it is because you may find those reasons clearly set forth in the Biblical dictionaries, and the commentaries on the Acts and on the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, and because I desire to treat of other and more important matters. It does seem to me on many grounds necessary that we should not shrink from facing the question, which on this Festival is forced on every member of the English Church, the question of the lawfulness in the court of conscience of using in our public worship formularies, to which as individuals we cannot *ex animo* subscribe. On Whitsunday there are two such formularies—the Athanasian Creed and the Proper Preface in the Communion Service. It does not admit of doubt that both of these are offensive to large numbers of Christian people. Of the Athanasian Creed I shall not now speak, for it has been much discussed of late years, and there is now a general understanding, that its place in the Liturgy ought no longer to be maintained. The rubric ordering its use is obeyed under protest, and on the supposition that a serious effort to alter the law is being made. Of the Proper Preface

I must speak, because in a few minutes it will be read as part of the most solemn Service of our Religion, and it is indispensable in the interest of religious self-respect, that it should be clear to the world what meaning we attach to the words we use. Those words, remember, are not our own, and we cannot fairly be held to them as if they were. They are words prescribed by a public authority to which, equally as Christians and as citizens, we owe due obedience. They are words, moreover, provided for general use, and, therefore, not fairly to be interpreted with the exactness which ought to mark the language of personal conviction.

It will be a sufficient justification for our use of the Preface to-day, if we show that we sincerely accept its essential teaching, and can give to its language, not indeed a literal, but a grave and sufficient, sense. For the rest, it is enough that we should frankly acknowledge the discrepancy between the formulary as it stands and the truth as we perceive it, and should pledge ourselves seriously to endeavour with respect to it an honest reformation. The Proper Preface runs as follows :—" Through Jesus Christ our Lord, according to whose most true promise, the Holy Ghost came down as at this time from heaven *with a sudden great sound, as it had been a mighty wind, in the likeness of fiery tongues*, lighting upon the Apostles, to teach them and to lead them to all truth ; giving them *both the gift of divers languages*, and also boldness with fervent zeal constantly to preach the Gospel unto all nations ; whereby we have been brought out of darkness and error into the clear light and true knowledge of Thee, and

of Thy Son, Jesus Christ." You will observe at once that the Preface is almost verbally scriptural: it is a mosaic of phrases drawn from the New Testament. Absolutely the only expressions which are fairly open to objection are those which take for granted the literal interpretation of the narrative in the Book of Acts. The difficulty is purely one of interpretation. Let me read to you the Preface without the clauses against which exception is justly taken, and you can judge for yourselves whether anything is really withdrawn from the religious content of the words :—

> Through Jesus Christ our Lord ; according to Whose most true promise, the Holy Ghost came down as at this time from heaven, lighting upon the Apostles to teach them and to lead them into all truth, giving them boldness also with fervent zeal constantly to preach the Gospel unto all nations : whereby we have been brought out of darkness and error into the clear light and true knowledge of Thee, and of Thy Son, Jesus Christ.

The omitted clauses contain no spiritual teaching, but affirm, as historical, statements to which, for reasons which appear irresistible, we attribute a symbolical character, and endorse an interpretation, which is contradicted by the general tenour of the New Testament, and is not easily reconciled even with the narrative itself. We believe that there was at the start of Christian history a mighty outpouring upon the Apostles of the Spirit of God, and we connect this blessed fact with the Advent and Work of Jesus Christ, but we do not think it necessary to believe in the alleged physical tokens of the Spirit's Presence, nor do we feel bound to suppose that the disciples received any supernatural knowledge of

foreign languages. That the Apostolic Church received no permanent gift of languages is certain, for the record of apostolic preaching at Lystra shows that Paul and Barnabas were unable to understand "the speech of Lycaonia": that the Apostles had little need of any such gift appears to be equally clear, for they worked among Greek-speaking populations, and wrote all their epistles and gospels in Greek. The sacred narrative, then, is read by us as a symbolical description of a spiritual fact. Symbol is one instrument of conveying truth, and in certain stages of human development a favourite and effective instrument. What then is the truth which the symbolic vesture of the Pentecostal narrative serves to express? I limit myself to the text. "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance . . . . . every man heard them speaking in his own language."

The sacred writer desires to express his conviction that the amazing successes of the Christian preachers, which he himself had witnessed, had their start and their explanation in one fact—the Presence in the Church of the Spirit of God. He desires to emphasize one remarkable consequence of the Spirit's Presence. The Christian preachers thus inspired were able to address themselves effectually to all sorts and conditions of men. In spite of the limitations implicit in Jewish birth and training, they were able to enter into the situation of men alien in race and habit, with such sympathy and insight, that they could adapt the message to their distinctive needs, and build up a

genuinely catholic society. This unquestionable fact he pictures as a miraculous speaking in languages hitherto unknown. They began, he says, "to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." They were perfectly intelligible to their hearers. Everyone heard that in the Gospel which appealed directly to himself, everyone discovered that as much could be said in the case of others, parted from him by the barriers of race, habit, creed, class, temperament. Men, who had been strangers all their lives, found themselves together in the Church, and wondered at the Power which had broken down the walls of partition. "When this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language." Now it is certain that these two facts—the outpouring on Christians of Power from above, and the consequence as witnessed in the course of Christian history—were never more clearly perceived by serious Christians than they are at the present time, and surely whosoever does so perceive them, and thankfully acknowledges the Divine Goodness which they attest, is able with complete sincerity to join in our worship on this Festival. Surely, he can make his own the Preface for Whitsunday, and pour into the words, whose literal sense he needs must set aside, a spiritual sense which is far deeper and more precious. I do not doubt for one moment that it is our duty frankly to acknowledge the extent of our dissent from the actual language of the Liturgy, and honestly to seek a completer harmony of words and meanings, but I condemn as unreasonable, unjust, and in its effects unfortunate, the

rigid attitude of those who keep no measures in their zeal for liturgical sincerity, and treat the venerable forms in which the Church of Christ confesses its faith and utters its worship, as if they were so many affidavits, taken down on oath from the lips of a witness, and subscribed as his exact and personal declaration. These forms are far more than this. They are the consecrated vehicles of the great convictions, on which the blessed company of faithful people dispersed throughout the whole world stands, as on a foundation of rock; and being such, they are not to be pressed into the service of less enduring and vital interests, methods of interpreting Scripture, or conceiving of spiritual facts, but are always to be used and understood for the largest purposes, and in the deepest senses of Christianity. When, therefore, in a few minutes we shall hear the officiating minister say in the name of the whole congregation of worshippers the appointed thanksgiving for this Festival, I apprehend that we ought not to be weighing in an anxious and critical temper the various clauses of the formulary, but to lift up our minds to its broad spiritual intention, and to throw ourselves frankly into the purpose of the Church as a whole, the purpose of thanksgiving for the Divine Spirit, whose presence in Christians is the source of life and power, and for the triumphs which, through human agents inspired by Himself, the Holy Spirit has won, and is winning in the world. If, however, the formularies of the Church become so far archaic in phrase or mode of thought as actually to be unedifying—and I think this may be the case with the Whitsuntide Preface, as it certainly is

with the Athanasian Creed—there is a clear case for change. At this juncture, when the constitutional authorities of the Church are actually debating the question of Prayer Book Revision, you will allow the propriety and relevance of these observations. Turn now for a few moments to the consideration of these twin subjects of Whitsuntide thanksgiving. When we declare that, at the start of Christianity, the Holy Ghost came to the Church, we are not denying that, from the beginnings of human history, the Spirit of God has been present and active in the hearts of men. Indeed, human life implies the presence and action of the Divine Spirit, for human life is essentially moral life, and moral life is the life inspired from above. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord," wrote the Jewish Sage long before the Advent of Christ, and the whole ministry of the prophets was built on the fact that there is a natural intercourse between man's spirit and its Eternal Source, an intercourse which carries the guidance of moral truth to the perplexed and fear-driven human mind. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good," wrote Micah in words which may be taken as the summary of the prophetic teaching—"the Everlasting God Himself hath showed thee what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" All moral teachings take for granted the natural intercourse of God and man.

We are not forgetful of this sublime truth, the sheet-anchor of our faith in the destinies of mankind, when we profess our belief that Christ's Advent marked a

decisive epoch in the spiritual history of the race, that in Him, as His true disciples, men are lifted to a higher than the natural plane, that the Holy Spirit enters into the life of the individual Christian, and of the society of Christians, in a fellowship, more constant, intimate, and effectual than of old. This nearer approach of God to man the prophets themselves saw in distant vision, and knew to be the condition of abiding human felicity. "A new heart also will I give you"—so Ezekiel interprets the purpose of the Lord towards Israel, "and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." The Advent of the Holy Ghost is both a fact of the world's history, attested by appropriate and sufficient testimonies, and a fact of personal experience known to every genuine Christian. Let any thoughtful student of the past reflect on the significance of the sudden emergence of all the exaltation of individual character and the sacrifice of individual lives, which are implied by the writings of the New Testament: let him realize the strangeness and suddenness of that moral revolution, which lies naked to view in those sacred pages which, after the lapse of eighteen centuries, confessedly enshrine the highest ideals and principles of human conduct. Let him collect the best he can find in the older literature of the world, and think out the difficult but necessary question of its moral implications, and let him honestly compare all with the writings of Christ's disciples. He

cannot but admit that he passes from a lower to a higher plane of human life, when he turns from the poets and philosophers of Greece and Rome, or the doubtful and verbose sacred writings of the East, or the suggestive religious witness of Egyptian and Etruscan tombs, to the sublimely simple teachings of those who claimed to live in the power of the Holy Ghost. Since the New Testament was written, one great Religion—that of Mohammed—has come into existence, and run a strange and terrible course. The Koran is, perhaps, the best known religious book apart from the Bible, for it has been often translated, and can be bought at a cheap rate. Read the Koran, and compel yourself to realize the types of character and conduct which it reveals and inspires. It is not the partiality of a Christian but the reason of a just man which decides, that the Koran belongs to an altogether lower moral plane than the New Testament. My argument is that the thoughtful student of the New Testament finds himself in presence of a moral revolution, a sudden and amazing rise in the level of human life, and that the force which effected this lies beyond the calculation and comprehension of the historians, and can only be satisfactorily explained on the Christian supposition, that Christ's Advent inaugurated a new and higher phase of human life. "I believe in the Holy Ghost" is the most reasonable, because the most satisfying, of all the explanations of the New Testament, and the facts which the New Testament certifies. The Christian hypothesis, however, becomes immensely more convincing when it is extended from the New Testament, as a solitary and

amazing phenomenon of the first century, to the whole history of which the New Testament may fairly be described as the source. The Christian Church, like the New Testament which records its beginning, is unique and profoundly suggestive. When I speak of the Christian Church, I am necessarily regarding the Society of disciples in its moral and religious aspects, the blessed company of all faithful people dispersed throughout the whole world. Of the members of this vast and various multitude may it not be said that, in so far as they correspond to the character which they bear as Christ's disciples, and are recognized by the world to be genuinely Christians, they are filled with the Holy Spirit, and begin to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives them utterance? Is it not certain that individual lives reproduce the very wonder of Pentecost in human history?

A moral revolution is effected: the whole life is lifted on to a higher plane: common men become capable of sublime thoughts, and heroic acts: the lowest ranges of social life are invested with moral splendour. "All things become new." Men take notice of the change: acknowledge its character; wonder at it; perhaps, even, attempt to analyze it: but in the end have to own themselves helpless to penetrate the secret, or appraise the forces of Conversion. The Christian has the key to the great Enigma. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: So is everyone that is born of the Spirit." Time was when the rulers of the world disliked and despised the fervour of

Christian conviction. They pointed to the destructive excesses of fanaticism, and tried by every means in their power to discourage enthusiasm in religion ; but they have learned at last that they pay too high a price for such success as waits on their efforts. " Enthusiasm is the genius of sincerity," it has been said, " and truth accomplishes no victories without it." The Holy Spirit is in the Church as the fire of a strong and pure enthusiasm, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Jesus ; and who is he who can dare to say to the motions of that Divine Influence, " Thus far, and no farther "? " Quench not the Spirit " was the reverent and courageous counsel of St. Paul : and he laid down the necessary conditions of the large tolerance he advised. " Quench not the Spirit ; despise not prophesyings ; prove all things ; hold fast that which is good ; abstain from every form of evil." There is a test, invariable and unfailing, which must be satisfied before the working of the Spirit of God can rightly be ascribed to any religious movement. It is the moral test ; the test laid down in the Master's words as to the false prophets. " By their fruits ye shall know them." The moral test is not to be identified with the popular test of success. They were pre-eminently successful religious teachers whom Christ described as finally receiving the dreadful sentence from His lips, " Depart from Me, all ye that work iniquity." Not success is the test of the Spirit's Presence, but morality, the " fruits of the Spirit." These are universally recognizable ; these command all men's homage. Of this witness of good deeds we may say that it needs no interpreter to be understood

of men. Wherever the Holy Ghost utters Himself through genuinely Christian lives, the Pentecostal scene is re-enacted on earth. When this sound is heard, "the multitude come together, and are confounded, because that every man hears them speaking in his own language." Men think the virtue lies in their systems, their creeds, and organization; but therein they err. The virtue lies in the Power of the Holy Ghost, which bends to blessed uses all Christian systems, creeds, and methods. In this conviction are the springs of courage and charity, the two qualities which most in our distracted age the Church demands. Courage to embrace the tasks imposed by this difficult time, to look difficulties in the face, and attempt the solution of problems which sadden and terrify us, to realize to the full our own errors and faults, and not to sink under the knowledge, to go forward in spite of all risks and threatenings along the way of duty—such courage comes from the conviction that we are not unhelped, that we have illuminations and assistances not of this world, that in a sense infinitely richer than he could imagine, we can say with the patriot Psalmist of Israel: "The Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge." With courage, also charity. For if, indeed, it be the case that the only effectual Power winning moral victories in the world is that Power of the Holy Ghost, which works equally in all the Churches of Christendom according to their self-surrender to His guidance, giving gifts according to His Will, and everywhere revealing His Presence by the same blessed consequences on character and life, then there is no more place left for the old arrogance

of ecclesiastical claim, or the Pharisaic exclusiveness of sectarianism; then "the still more excellent way" of love lies open to all Christians, and all the discord of Creeds and Churches fails and passes before one holy and ardent confession.

"No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit."

PART III

XV

REPORT OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON ECCLESIASTICAL DISCIPLINE

I. The Present Situation in the National Church.

WHATEVER may be the fate of the recommendations which are appended to the Report just issued by the Commissioners, there can be no question as to the singular importance of the account they have given of the actual state of things in the Church of England. Throughout the embittered controversies of the last few years, candid and honest men have been embarrassed by the difficulty of finding any statement of the facts, which could be fairly regarded as both authoritative and unbiassed. There have been statements enough which were neither authoritative nor unbiassed, and these have been sufficiently alarming, and there have been in and out of Parliament assurances of Bishops and Ministers, which were to that extent authoritative, but were almost invariably of that minimizing and optimistic character which

belongs to official pronouncements. The candid and honest citizen has been seriously embarrassed by the absence of trustworthy information, and his genuine desire to take some effective course with "Romanizers" has been sterilized by his equitable reluctance to proceed on an insecure basis of knowledge. The Report of the Commissioners terminates the epoch of uncertainty. Fourteen men of the highest character, all of them well known, and some of them of the highest position in Church and State, have met no less than 118 times in order to investigate the facts, or alleged facts, which have disturbed the public mind so grievously during recent years. There can be no question of authority since they sat with the King's Commission, and there can be as little question of character since the names of the Commissioners are known, and they have described frankly their methods of investigation.

It is, indeed, the case that the importance of the Report is to some extent diminished by the nature of the evidence which was at the disposal of the Commissioners, by its artificial character, and limited extent. The statement on the first page of the Report has a damaging effect on all that follows:—

> A large body of complaints was brought before us, mainly emanating from three sources: namely, witnesses produced (*a*) by the Reverend the Honourable W. E. Bowen, M.A.; (*b*) by the Joint Evidence Committee of "The Church of England League" and the "National Protestant Church Union"; and (*c*) by "The Church Association."

To some extent, perhaps, the unpleasant impression which this statement cannot fail of producing

is lessened by the preceding statement, that the Commissioners had made efforts to secure a more independent form of witness than that of the hirelings of partizan associations :—

> After our first meeting we published the following statement: "The Royal Commission is prepared to consider applications from persons desiring to give evidence of breaches or neglect of the law relating to the conduct of Divine Service in the Church of England, and to the ornaments or fittings of Churches, prevalent within the last twelve months (that is, since May 1st, 1903). In selecting the witnesses who will then be asked to give evidence, special consideration will be given to those who are, or have been, Church officers in any parish, or are qualified to speak from wide or special knowledge."

It is added that this pronouncement "produced little response from Church officers or other persons having special connection with particular churches." We may observe that this is precisely what might be expected to result from the presence and activity of partizan associations. Ordinary citizens cease to look to the law for redress of grievances, and have recourse to nearer, and as experience seems to show, more effective protection. It cannot be concluded from the absence of independent witnesses that there was an absence of aggrieved parishioners, for aggrieved parishioners probably preferred to make the partizan associations the instruments through which to express their grievances, but it adds a special element of difficulty to the problem, that the people have so completely lost confidence in the legal administration of the National Church, that they can no longer be persuaded to use the constitutional methods of remedying the ills they complain of.

The Commissioners are, indeed, fully conscious of the suspicious aspect of the evidence on which they had to base their conclusions, and they are at pains to assure us that they made all due allowances for the circumstances under which it was tendered. It is important to emphasize this point since we propose to make the Report of the Commissioners the basis of a review of the situation in the National Church at the present time. This, then, is what they say as to their evidence :—

> The evidence which stands admitted or unchallenged is sufficient to enable us to discharge the duty entrusted to us ; and it is on this evidence that our Report is based. . . .
>
> In weighing the complaints, we have thought it necessary to bear in mind the special circumstances under which the evidence was prepared and given. The witnesses were not in sympathy with the services they attended ; and their object in attending them was to inquire as to the existence of irregularities such as those which they subsequently reported. Further, in many cases it should be noted that a series of questions had been furnished to them beforehand by the Church Association and the Joint Evidence Committee, which in substance were instructions as to the specific things which they were invited to observe. But, after making all proper deductions in respect of these considerations, we are satisfied that the great mass of the evidence which we have received is trustworthy, in the sense that the witnesses who attended services for the purpose of observing facts have truly reported what they saw. . . .
>
> We have in no case invited or instigated anyone to attend Divine Service for the purpose of observation ; but we are bound to say that it would have been practically impossible, apart from the evidence which rested on such observation, to ascertain the facts which we were appointed to investigate. We must also add that it does not follow that irregularities in the services in a church should be passed over because no habitual worshippers complain. Not only have all the parishioners a right who might possibly attend if those services were differently conducted, but also

> the nation has a right to expect that in the National Church the services should be conducted according to law. Therefore we have felt bound to receive and weigh all evidence which appeared to us to be trustworthy, without regard to the *status* or the motives of those who tendered it.

It has seemed well to set down in the Commissioners' own words their estimate of the evidence, because, until the evidence itself is published, there does not exist any means for forming an independent estimate of its value. The language we have quoted must in fairness be allowed to constitute as close an approximation to an apology for the partizan associations as the circumstances of the case admit. Perhaps it is not altogether satisfactory, that they should be able to appeal in self-justification to the deliberate declaration of a Royal Commission to the effect that, apart from their sinister activity, a great and urgent public service would have been rendered impracticable—that, in short, they alone stood between the Commission and a complete fiasco. The fact itself, however, has considerable value as throwing light on the present situation. Given the public discontent with the conduct of the parochial clergy, and the general conviction that the requirements of the law were being generally set at naught—and both assumptions cannot but be made by the student of this Report—how has it come about, that there is need of extra-parochial organization to secure attention to parochial complaints? The question is the more perplexing when it is borne in mind, that the law provides an elaborate machinery for the expressing of parochial grievances, and exacts from the churchwardens in every parish the yearly assurance

that all things in the parish church are legally conducted. The Commissioners report that "in many cases the bishops are insufficiently acquainted with the condition of their dioceses in regard to the matters which are the subjects of our inquiry," yet those matters appear to be covered by the annual presentments of the churchwardens, and it might have been presumed that, at a time of public excitement with respect to them, churchwardens would have filled up their official forms with care and honesty, and bishops would have found time to learn the contents of the forms returned to them. If so much official competence cannot be taken for granted, it is difficult to see how any legal system can be effectively administered. The explanation of the singular apathy of the parishioners, and the still more singular incompetence of the churchwardens, is obvious enough. In the course of the last half century the National Church over a great part of the country has become a denomination; its worship has grown to be, and to be regarded as, a matter for the congregation, and not a concern of the whole parish as such; its discipline has been nowise essentially different from that no-discipline, which is the strength and scandal of mere congregationalism. Bishops have been well content if no complaints disturbed them, unconscious of the fact that the most sinister of all symptoms may, in certain circumstances, be the absence of complaints. To some extent, perhaps this denominationalising of the National Church has followed inevitably from the abolition of common responsibility for the maintenance of the parish

church and churchyard. When the entire cost of repairing the fabric was thrown upon the congregation, because the parishioners as such were no longer legally responsible, it was but natural that the character of the fabric should seem to change. It sank into the common category of "places of worship," and was more and more judged by the same standards. The congregation felt aggrieved if others, who contributed nothing to the maintenance of public worship in the parish church, who had identified themselves with some other denomination, parted not rarely from the churchgoers by political opinion as well as by religious preference, suddenly reverted to a character which they had themselves ostentatiously repudiated, and claimed to have a voice in the control of services, which they never attended, and in the government of a Church, which they openly denounced. It cannot be denied that there was real force in this complaint, and, though it does not cover the whole case in point, yet it has so much strength that it paralyzes the arm of administrative authority. Commonly the equity of non-interference has been as clearly perceived on the one side as on the other. The more extreme the departure from the normal and accustomed system of the National Church, the more apparent has the divorce between the congregation and the parish become. In the urban areas, where the illegalities have most abounded, there has been no correcting influence of long-standing local tradition to act as a drag on the wheels of innovation. The parish church has come into existence within the knowledge and observation of the parishioners, and they know that it is neither

more nor less, in origin and government, congregational than the neighbouring Nonconformist Churches, which often rival, or even surpass, it in architectural pretension. Meanwhile the whole administrative system remains incorrigibly territorial, and, apart from the parochial machinery, there exists no disciplinary machinery at all. The Church of England has been disestablished piecemeal in the course of the last century, and now survives the process embarrassed by the incidental destruction of the very presuppositions of the discipline of an Established Church.

Had this disestablishing process proceeded without the intervention of any other influence, there is no reason why the religious harmony of the localities should have been disturbed, but the whole situation has been changed by the triumph of Tractarian principles among the parochial clergy. It has been pointed out by the advocates and historians of the Oxford Movement, that "Ritualism" was not characteristic of its earlier stages, but came into prominence at a later stage, when the Tractarian principles had ceased to be the concern of fellows and tutors, and were being reduced to some practical application by parochial clergymen. The Commissioners have enriched their Report by an "Historical Survey" of Ritualism in the Church of England. It emphasizes the absence of Ritualism from the practice, and even the intention of the Tractarian leaders.

> If, on the one hand, it is true to say that what is called Ritualism is a development of the Tractarian movement, it is, on the other hand, as true to say that it

> represented a great change, an unforeseen phase, a new departure in that movement. No plan or expectation of any such development appears in the work of those who gave life and guidance to the Oxford Movement in its early days, and wrote the "Tracts for the Times" (page 55).

Readers of Richard Hurrel Froude's *Remains* will hardly endorse this paragraph, but it may be allowed that, by comparison with their later disciples, the Tractarians were a law-abiding and reasonable folk. The point is, that they introduced into the normal evolution of the Established Church a new and most disturbing factor. The curiously favourable description of the Tractarian Movement, which the Report embodies, will sufficiently indicate the nature and drift of this factor.

> The conception which lay at the base of the Tractarian Movement was that of the Holy Catholic Church as a visible body upon earth, bound together by a spiritual, but absolute, unity, though divided, before the eyes of men, into national and other sections. This conception drew with it, as an inevitable corollary, the sense of ecclesiastical continuity, of the intimate and unbroken connection between the Primitive Church and the Church of England, and of the importance of the Fathers as guides and teachers for churchmen in the present day. It also tended to emphasize points of communion rather than points of difference between those different branches of the Church which recognize the doctrine or fact of Apostolic succession. While by no means desiring to pass over the Reformation or to undo its work, the Tractarians set themselves to prove that the reforms of the sixteenth century involved no such breach with the past as was commonly supposed. In a word, the practical end in view was to be promoted by the diffusion of ideas resting largely upon an historical basis, enlisting the aid of the past to vitalize and inspire the present and the future (page 54).

As soon as the conceptions thus euphemistically described had to be translated into the practice of

enthusiastic and often half-educated parish clergymen, the result is not difficult to imagine. Nonconformists found themselves denounced as "schismatics"; diatribes against the Reformation were the burden of many sermons, and much popular literature; "Protestantism" became a term of reproach on the lips of the clergy; and a great rift began to show itself between the personal following of individual "parish priests," and the general body of the parishioners. This was a new kind of congregationalism, growing along with the other, and interwoven with it at every turn. The Oxford Movement passed into a new phase when it became organized as a propaganda, both in the parishes and in the nation. In 1860 the English Church Union came into existence, and was followed in 1865 by the Church Association. When powerful organizations existed with the express object of promoting certain conceptions of the Church, it is clear that the conflict could no longer be merely parochial. On both sides it came to be perceived that a war of ideas was in progress, that the very character of the National Church was at stake. Was the Church of England to remain one of the Churches of the Reformation, distinctive in certain features of its system, but consciously and professedly standing with the rest of the Protestant world, in opposition to the conception of Christianity, which prevailed in the Middle Ages, and is maintained by the unreformed Church of Rome? This is the fourth time in English history that the issue has been presented. The Roman triumph under Mary I. led the nation to its decisive accept-

ance of the Reformation under Elizabeth; the movement which began with Bancroft, and found its conspicuous exponent and martyr in Laud, involved the temporary destruction of the Anglican Settlement, and owed such victory as it gained at the Restoration rather to the political reaction than to any change in the national sentiment in religion. Finally, at the Revolution, the bigotry of James II. forced the old issue again to the front. The deposition of that monarch and the legislation of his successor settled the character of the National Church as unequivocally Protestant, and that character remained unquestioned for a century and a half. The Tractarians renewed the old controversy. So long as their movement remained academic and literary, it did not greatly move the national mind, but when it passed to the parishes, and common folk witnessed a revolution of teaching and ceremonial in the parish churches, it was not possible that the real nature of the issue should be longer concealed. This is a more fundamental issue than any which divides one Protestant denomination from another. It is the root issue of the Reformation. There is no need to underrate the charm and excellency of Catholicism, whether mediæval or Roman. Protestants are in no way debarred from appropriating and using to the full the common Christian heritage of liturgy and sacred learning. But, when all is said, there is a fundamental distinction of religious attitude involved, when the question to be or not to be of Protestantism in the National Church is raised. In the answer to that question every Englishmen is directly concerned; it

transcends parochial interests, and cannot be identified with congregational preferences. The Nonconformists are entitled to come into the discussion, for they cannot possibly lie outside the far-reaching consequences of the decision. It would be the very extreme of parochialism to deny that every citizen, as such, is interested in the type of Christianity proposed to the people with the immense authority of an ancient established Church. The influence of the parish clergy is far greater than might be inferred from some popular descriptions of the Church. Ordinarily an incumbent of tact and character is on familiar terms with his parishioners without distinction of sect, has their complete confidenee, and in the parish schools shapes the course of religious instruction, and determines the "atmosphere." His social position tells, and generally for good, in many directions. This influence is to a very great extent contingent on the circumstance that he is recognized as something more than a minister of religion, that he adds to that sacred character a public responsibility and has a traditional claim to the general regard. It is a matter of national concern that this vast indirect influence should be wielded on principles which the nation approves, and towards ends which command the general sanction. The reference of the Commissioners did not extend beyond illegalities, and the gravest matters do not come under that description, but the illegalities themselves are suggestive of much else, and their gravity consists far more in what they imply than in what they are. It was, perhaps, inevitable that the Commissioners should place

together in the same category of "illegality" such harmless and possibly edifying practices as "the "introduction by the Bishop of addresses in the Confirmation Service," and "the giving of benediction, or blessing, after the sermon at Evening Prayer," and such "breaches having significance" as the introduction of "stoups for holy water," and the service "known as the 'Blessing of Palms,'" or the "illegal practices of a graver kind" which are enumerated and discussed in sections 19 to 34 of the Report. "Illegality" is an attribute which varies in gravity from almost nothing to the extreme of importance, and it may cover an honest attempt to obey the spirit of a rubric by some sacrifice of the letter as well as a deliberate attempt to defeat the purpose, as well as violate the letter, of the law. It is in this unavoidable ambiguity that the Commissioners justly recognize one of the main difficulties of the existing situation, and one of the principal causes of the impotence of administrative authority. In trying to avoid a pedantic and impracticable rigidity in enforcing rubrics, which in their latest forms are parted from the present time by more than 240 years, the Bishops have placed a weapon in the hands of the "Ritualists," which the latter have been quick to use. An aspect of unreality is imposed on the whole contention for the maintenance of order in the Church. The most loyal are classed with the most lawless in the common description of law-breakers, and in the general confusion they gain most who, in the common phrase, are fishing in troubled waters and know what they want. There is no principle involved in the "illegalities" by

which sensible clergymen endeavour to increase the spiritual efficiency of their work, although no one can read through the list given by the Commissioners without perceiving that many illegalities have no connection with spiritual efficiency, that, to speak frankly, there is a lamentable amount of genuine idleness among some of the clergy, and a deplorable absence of any true perception of the incongruity of law-breaking and the clerical office. These faults, however, did not occasion the appointment of a Royal Commission, and do not require an ecclesiastical revolution to correct. They raise no problem, and wake no alarm. We may put them on one side with the single observation that, as they stand in relation to no principle, and are in no quarter defended or excused, they ought to yield to the firm administration of at least so much of the law as the public conscience endorses, and the public intelligence approves. We confine ourselves to the "breaches having significance," and ask what the Commissioners have to tell as to their character, and the extent of their existence. With obvious propriety they place in the foreground the practices which are connected with the administration of the Holy Communion. Let it be observed, that the dividing line between the mediæval and the Reformed Church of England was nowhere more clearly and firmly drawn than at this point. The "Mass" was abolished; the Communion was enthroned in its place. Every parish church bore evidence to the violent decisiveness of the change. The altar with its rich furniture was taken down, and its place was occupied by a communion table, often of the

humblest description. Our older parishes contain the record of the change told in the sternly terse terms of churchwardens' accounts. There are the sales under Henry and Edward, the purchases or re-purchases under Mary, the final and systematic sales of the restored altars and ornaments under Elizabeth. In the controversial literature of the time the conflict of the Churches was by both parties made to turn on the doctrine and practice of the Mass. There was certainly a vast amount of sacrilegious violence in the course of the changes, and the standard of reverence in the administration of the Sacraments sank to a sadly low level, but the return of calmer times, and the rekindling of a worthier spirit in respect to the conduct of public worship, did not affect the fundamental divergence between the two modes of regarding the Lord's Supper. The dominant character of the Mass was that of a Sacrifice; the dominant character of the Communion was that of a sacred Feast. The priest was supreme in the one case; the communicants in the other. There could be no "sacrifice" without a "priest"; there could be no "sacred feast" without communicants. While thus the conception of the Sacrament had changed, the rites and ceremonies, with which it was administered, were altered appropriately. Everything that emphasized the sacrificial aspect was abolished. Vestments, in spite of the Ornaments Rubric, ceased to be worn; solitary masses were prohibited, and the minimum number of communicants was laid down in the rubric. The Commissioners report that the Eucharistic vestments are

now worn in no less than 1,526 churches. This is a large number, but the full significance of the number does not appear until it is remembered that fifty years ago there probably was not a single case of the use of vestments, that the introduction of the practice has provoked the keenest resentment, that it has been made the subject of legal action, that the Courts have decided against it, and that, in spite of all, the number of churches in which the vestments are worn increases every year. We are not now discussing the question of the possible reversal of the decision of the Supreme Court, nor attempting to draw a distinction between those clergymen, if indeed any such exist, who really are coerced in conscience on the point of legality to introduce the vestments even in the teeth of the King's Courts. The point is the inference to be drawn as to the loyalty of the English clergy to the principles of the English Reformation. Is it extravagant to assume that the use of the vestments indicates a definite acceptance of the mediæval and Roman conception of the Holy Communion, and as definite a repudiation of the conception which the English Reformers adopted? At least one Bishop allows the clergy to introduce the vestments if in doing so they can secure the acquiescence of their communicants, the question of legality not apparently being thought worth considering, and the parishioners as such being left out of count. It is insolently argued by the advocates for vestments, that the familiarity of so many parishioners with the appearance of vestments in English churches has destroyed the objection that vestments are "Roman," as if the objection were

merely to the name, and not to the substance and tendency of the Roman doctrine.

Vestments, however, do not stand alone. They often go along with other practices, which not even the most incorrigible minimizer of "Ritualism" will be able to purge from the taint of Romanism. There is the case of the ceremonial use of incense. Twenty-five incumbents of the London diocese "explained" to Bishop Creighton that they "dared not abandon altogether a 'laudable practice of the "whole Catholic Church of Christ," conspicuously Scriptural and hitherto held to be sanctioned by the Ornaments Rubric of the Book of Common Prayer,' and that for these and other reasons they were obliged to regard that use of incense as involving a principle, the violation of which they could neither submit to themselves nor ask their people to accept." The humiliating negotiations, into which Bishop Creighton and his successor in the See of London entered with a small knot of incense-burning clergymen, are related at length by the Commissioners, and deserve the attentive study of everyone who would realize the direction in which the Ritualists are moving, the impracticable character of their contentions, and the unabashed disloyalty to the principles of the Reformation which marks their language and action. It is of course true that these clergy are relatively few, but it is equally true that they have the general sympathy and support of a very large number, that the "discipline" under which, by a ludicrous misuse of the term, their churches are said to be placed by the Bishops, inflicts on them no stigma of disgrace, but rather

advertises the impunity with which they can defy the only Anglican authority they even pretend to regard.

"Incense" and "reservation" have a particular interest as not only being plainly illegal, but as having been the subjects of a bold experiment by which Archbishop Benson endeavoured to create a tribunal which could command the obedience of the Ritualists. But Archbishops can carry no conviction to "Catholic" minds, if it appear that they have respect to the law which they are set to administer, and do not address themselves to a fresh and "independent" examination of "Catholic" antiquity, with the understanding that they confirm the conclusions at which the Ritualists themselves have already arrived! Take, again, the peculiarly Roman practice of "solitary" Masses. There is no more respected and no more influential body of clergymen in the country than the Cowley Fathers. They are regarded with just admiration as devout and severe ascetics, working with apostolic fervour and praying with mediæval frequency. Their example cannot fail to affect a large number of the clergy. Probably they command a degree of attention and imitation which might move the envy of every Bishop on the Bench. Here is an account of the manner in which the Cowley Fathers administer the Holy Communion according to the rites of the Reformed English Church.

> On the occasion of the visit to this church, Tuesday, September 8th, 1903, "The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin," the Mass was celebrated at 8 a.m. in both chapels simultaneously. May I say I have quoted the word

> "Mass" and use it not offensively, but because the service was so described? I was present at the Mass in the North Chapel, and heard distinctly the voice of the priest saying Mass in the South Chapel.

It is no doubt true that such purely Roman procedure is as yet comparatively rare; but the significant fact about it is that it commands the sympathetic approval of great numbers of the clergy, and indicates a mode of teaching which is plainly inconsistent with the principles of the Reformation. It is no surprise to learn that "the Roman Catholic Festival of Corpus Christi for the special honour and adoration of the consecrated elements is now observed in a considerable number of English churches" (p. 41). The unhappy controversy as to the place which the clergy shall be permitted to retain in the system of State schools is not likely to be rendered less embittered by the assurance that "numerous instances, nearly one hundred in all, show that children, many of them being unconfirmed, are trained in the habit of attending the service of Holy Communion without receiving the Sacrament" (p. 32). It is difficult to believe that the following is a description of a service in an English parish church; but the Commissioners report it as given by an eye-witness of the service of "Vespers of the Blessed Virgin," held at St. Martin's, North Kensington, on the evening of Candlemas Day, 1904:

> Before the service began, ten candles on the retables of the high altar and two on the altar itself were lighted, also nineteen candles on and about the Mary altar, six candles on and about the altar of the Sacred Heart, and two before the picture of St. Joseph. I also saw a young girl wearing a white veil (one of sixteen similarly attired)

> take a candle out of the candle-box near the Mary altar, put a coin in the box, and, having lighted the taper at the altar candles, place it on the taper stand (page 43).

The really serious matter is not the silly service itself, though that is not without seriousness, but the fact that there is no volume of professional censure within the Church itself provoked by such grotesque proceedings; the service is reported and spoken about as something creditable to the courage and "Catholicity" of the clergy concerned. The only thing that provokes professional contempt in the rank of the English clergy is the reputation of being a "Protestant"; and no extravagance, which demonstrates a contempt for "Protestantism," is beyond the reach of pardon. Services in church, however reprehensible and contrary to the law, are at least avoidable by all who disapprove of them, but the effect of the practice of private confession and the circulation of religious manuals is not thus to be confined. Perhaps no part of the Report is more full of grave suggestion than the paragraphs which deal with these two subjects. With regard to both the protection which the law can give is extremely slight; everything really turns on the conception of his office, and the version of Christianity, which the clergyman himself accepts. It is admitted that in certain circumstances the Prayer Book permits and even advises private confession to the clergyman, and therefore it is not possible to place the practice of hearing confessions in the category of illegal acts. The Commissioners touch but slightly on the subject, though their brief reference is sufficiently disquieting.

> We have not deemed it to be our duty to inquire into the manner in which private confession to a priest is conducted in the Church of England, as it does not appear to us to fall within the law relating to the conduct of Divine Service and to the ornaments and fittings of churches. It is not therefore for us as a Commission to express an opinion whether it is a good or a bad thing that confessions, when heard in such cases as those provided for in the first Exhortation in the Holy Communion Service, should be heard in the open church. But the instances in which witnesses have testified, without contradiction, to arrangements made in a church for the purpose of hearing confession, and to notices put up, or given during service, of the time and place at which confessions would be heard, are sufficiently numerous to justify the inference that the practice of habitual confession has increased; and the evidence shows that it was pressed by some clergymen on their congregations as a duty, especially before Confirmation, and in some cases before receiving the Holy Communion (pages 44, 45).

If the Mass be the distinctive Roman service, the practice of private confession, as a normal element in the religious life, may fairly be called the distinctive Roman discipline. Establish the Mass in the parish church as the "principal service" of the Lord's Day, and train the people to the habit of confession, and to all intents and purposes you have substituted the system of the Roman for that of the Reformed Church. The character presupposed in the clergy will be the "sacerdotal" character in the full sinister sense which the word bears. The type of Christianity created in the parishes will be the Roman type, and not all the little safeguards in detail which may be devised to hoodwink the English people into supposing that the law is being re-asserted, and the principles of the English Reformation secured, will be worth anything at all against the assured natural developments public

and private of an ecclesiastical system, which is as truly Roman as if the Encyclicals of Pius X. were posted on the church doors, and the officiating clergy looked to Westminster rather than to Canterbury for episcopal direction. It may be taken as certain that the Mass and the Confessional go hand in hand. Historically they are closely united, and it is apparent that both rest on the same conception of the Christian ministry. It is a matter of constant observation that the practice of confession, once adopted as a regular part of parochial method, tends to become the dominant part. Every other element of pastoral duty falls into the background, and the parish clergyman brings into the front line of preaching and private exhortation the perilous ministry, which has come to have in his view the character of the *unum necessarium* of the religious life. There is a singular fascination about the Confessional; it appeals to the deepest sentiments of the human heart, and draws into its service the most gracious and self-abnegating personalities, but unless human experience, through many centuries and in many varieties of circumstance, be wholly a misleading guide, the Confessional is ultimately a demoralising influence in a nation. Priest and penitent alike are injured by a relationship, which is fundamentally false. There is no danger now threatening the English Church more serious and more urgent than this, which is implied in the rapid extension of systematic confession in the parishes. A wedge of suspicion is being driven between the clergy and the robustest moral sections of English life, which sooner or later will rend asunder with destructive violence

the seeming solid fabric of our National Church. The danger is all the greater since from the nature of the case it is as yet largely unperceived and even unsuspected. Not the worst, but the best and most devoted clergy are being drawn into the adoption of the system of the Confessional. Their zeal may excuse their action; their sacerdotal principles compel it; but it carries the promise of national alienation from the English Church.

Chapter VII. of the Report deals with "Manuals," limiting the term to such publications only as may throw light on the practice of the clergy in their conduct of public worship.

> These works vary much both in their contents and in their purpose. Altar-cards are designed to be placed on the Holy Table for actual use in celebrating Holy Communion in church. Some manuals also appear to be designed for the same purpose; others are intended for the use of members of the congregation rather than of the clergy, but nevertheless contain, in addition to private devotions and religious teaching, certain forms of public service. There has been little evidence of the actual use of altar-cards and manuals by the celebrant in the service, or as to the extent of the circulation of most of them; but in so far as they throw light on words used and actions performed by the clergy in and as part of public worship, we have felt it our duty to consider the publications of this kind which have been submitted to us (pages 48, 49).

This is a straitly limited reference, and leaves out of direct handling the most serious aspect of the subject, yet even so the information published by the Commissioners is very instructive. A series of manuals is named and briefly described. Perhaps the most important is the first on the list, "Catholic Prayers for Church of England People," Sixth Edition (21st

thousand), 1904, which appears to be the work of the well-known Ritualist preacher, Father Stanton, of St. Alban's, Holborn. The importance of this particular manual lies in two circumstances, the outspokenness which marks its composition and the fact that it emanates from a Church which for more than a generation has been the Mecca and model of large numbers of the English clergy.

> This book contains (page 38, etc.) a Communion Service. The title in the Prayer Book, "The order of the Administration of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion" is changed to "Mass and Holy Communion." A note is appended to this title, which explains the difference between Low Mass and High Mass, and instructs the reader, "when you receive Holy Communion to do so at Low Mass." "High Mass is a Mass sung with music and grander ceremonies." The form of service and private devotions which follow are adapted for the use both of those who intend to communicate and also of those who are "hearing Mass."
>
> The service is an English translation of the Roman (as distinguished from the Sarum) Ordinary and Canon of the Prayer Book inserted here and there, incompletely and not always in their proper order. . . . The service assumes the presence and veneration of relics in or under the altar, and contains prayers to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints. Adoration of the consecrated elements is directed in accordance with the Roman rubrics.
>
> It seems clear that a Communion Service, conducted in accordance with this manual, could not (save for the fact that the communicants if there be any, receive in both kinds) be distinguished by the congregation from the Roman Mass in English, with which its ritual and to a great extent its language are substantially identical (page 49).

The Commissioners report that "there appears to be in circulation "a large number of manuals, specially intended for children" (p. 51). Some specimens are

given, of which one will suffice here. A manual entitled "Catholic Devotions for Young People," p. 125, contains these astonishing "devotions":—

> A little visit to Jesus in the Tabernacle . . . . I bow down to worship Thee truly present in the Tabernacle. . . . I thank Thee also for allowing me to come to visit Thee. . . . I pray to Thee also for ———— and for the Holy souls in Purgatory. I also beg Thee to give me ———— Mary, my Mother, obtain this for me (page 51).

Other manuals urge the "use of Holy Water" and provide for the "blessing of Holy Water"; many of them "contain prayers addressed to the Virgin Mary and other Saints." One example is given of an "Antiphon to be used throughout the year at Lauds" which runs thus: "Mother, loving Mother, hear thy children crying, plead for us with Jesus, every grace supplying; by thy sweet protection, bring us to the gates of Heaven."

All this is tiresome and petty reading, and perhaps there is considerable danger that serious men will be disqualified from considering it adequately by the involuntary disgust which it cannot but provoke in intelligent and educated minds. Yet it needs no long reflection or elaborate argument to disclose its gravity from the English citizen's point of view. What is to be said of the intellectual quality of the religious teaching, which lies at the basis of these "devotions"? What must be the consequence to mind and character of surrendering one's self to the habitual government of the notions, which are implicit in all this belated and childish superstition, and indulging in the paltry and frivolous ceremonial, by which it is appropriately

expressed in the Churches? The influence which it is calculated to have upon young and immature minds is as powerful as it is mischievous. Religion taught in the spirit and by the aids of these manuals, and nourishing itself with the theatrical ceremonialism to which they are designed as auxiliary, cannot but become hostile alike to intellectual vigour and to moral health. At best no more can be expected from such a system than a dependent and credulous piety; at worst a dangerous and mentally degraded fanaticism. This is a consequence plainly reached within the Roman sphere, and it is the despair of patriotic citizens. Why should we sit patiently by and suffer the same mischief to be carried into English life through the agency of that very institution, which exists to guard Religion against such gross perversions? The core of the national complaint is not that an admittedly ancient and partially impracticable system is departed from by the clergy in points where it is plainly either obsolete or obsolescent, but that the established position and far-reaching authority of the National Church are being bent to the service of an ecclesiastical propaganda, which is fundamentally inconsistent with evangelical religion and social stability. At a time when the pressure of international competition is bearing with ever-waxing severity on English Life, and the gravest anxieties are felt and expressed by well-informed and responsible men as to the competence of our people to hold their own under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, no thoughtful Englishmen can put aside as undeserving his most careful consideration the question

which this Report suggests—viz., whether the influence of the National Church is tending to increase or to diminish the moral and intellectual resources of the State. It is the case that the Commissioners append to seventy-six pages of the most disquieting information ever presented officially to the attention of the English public, some eight lines of reassurance:—

> The complaints made to us relate to a small proportion of the 14,242 churches in England and Wales, and vary greatly in their character and gravity. To preclude an impression which would, we believe, be unjust to the general body of the clergy, we desire to place on record our conviction that the evidence gives no justification for any doubt that in the large majority of parishes the work of the Church is being quietly and diligently performed by clergy who are entirely loyal to the principles of the English Reformation as expressed in the Book of Common Prayer.

It is right to give all due prominence to this optimistic conclusion attached to a Report which will, as the Commissioners evidently perceive, seriously disturb the public mind, but it is necessary to remember that it is no more than an opinion, and carries just so much weight as in all the circumstances may attach to an opinion unsupported by any evidence, and almost avowedly inconsistent with the appearance of the case. We may point out that "the principles of the English Reformation" are not—for the purposes of the Commissioners—properly to be sought in the Book of Common Prayer solely, if even mainly. Within the covers of the Prayer Book the Thirty-nine Articles are clearly the most authoritative declaration of such principles, and, whatever else may be said about the Churchmanship which the Report shows to be common and perhaps

prevailing among the clergy, it is evident that it has gone far away from the platform of the Thirty-nine Articles. The Report itself is perhaps the most impressive evidence of the extent of the departure from the principles of the English Reformation which has taken place, for the cardinal feature of the Establishment af the Reformed Church was precisely that supremacy of the Civil Power "over all persons and in all causes ecclesiastical as well as civil," which at least in principle the Commissioners seem to surrender. Into their proposals, however, it is not our purpose at present to examine: that task must be reserved for a separate article. Here we emphasize what has already been pointed out, that the true significance of the facts certified by the Commissioners lies far more in the light they throw on the conception of Christianity now being adopted by the clergy than in the facts themselves. If, within the sixty years since the secession of John Henry Newman aroused public opinion to a perception of the true tendency of the Tractarian Movement, so much progress has been made in the de-Protestantizing of the National Church, what may be expected in the future? All this multitude of strange teachings and practices which the Commissioners unfold, and which have the sanction or sympathy of many hundreds, in some cases, as in the crucial case of the Vestments, of many thousands of the clergy, have been brought in within a single human lifetime. That is the serious aspect of the situation. The illegalities are deliberate, calculated with a view to ulterior objects, organized, not the venial and almost unavoidable procedure of

honest men embarrassed by an ancient and nearly obsolete system. Every attempt to clear up whatever legal uncertainty really exists has been defeated by repudiations of the only law-expounding authorities which can claim the obedience of loyal Englishmen. The only working form of "Catholicism" is from the nature of the case unable to exercise control over the clergy of the Church of England. Was there ever in the whole course of Christian history so fair a field for self-willed individuals as the English Ritualist possesses in the National Church? National authorities are refused in the name of "Catholicism," and there are no recognized "Catholic" authorities existing which can take their place. It might be supposed that the very grotesqueness of the situation would open the eyes of intelligent men to its intrinsic absurdity, that they would feel themselves coerced in reason and in conscience to stand on one platform or the other, to acknowledge one or other of the only authorities which exist to claim their allegiance. Who, however, that reflects on the puerilities solemnly described in this strangest of all Blue Books, will feel able to indulge the hope that, where self-will and impunity are so wedded to superstition, it can be assumed that intelligence will be allowed even so much part in ecclesiastical politics?

XVI

REPORT OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON ECCLESIASTICAL DISCIPLINE

II. The Recommendations of the Commissioners.

The recommendations with which the Commissioners bring their Report to a conclusion are to be considered from two points of view. On the one hand, they are directed to the treatment of an existing situation; on the other hand, they contemplate a re-modelling of the National Church, not merely in its disciplinary and judicial, but also in its legislative arrangements. We propose to inquire whether, for the one purpose, they are adequate, and for the other wholesome.

The practical problem which confronted the Commissioners was two-fold—an actual procedure in many respects not merely lawless but in the last degree exasperating, and a powerful tendency Romewards in the ranks of the clergy, avowed in some quarters, and indeed apparent to everybody. The

last and incomparably most difficult part of their task has been left alone. There are no suggestions as to some better methods of training men for holy Orders than those now provided by the Theological Colleges, or of some better arrangements for training the newly-ordained than those which permit them to choose, almost without hindrance, their own teachers, and to enjoy at the very start of their professional career, an importance and an independence which might seem excessive even in the case of incumbents. There are, again, no suggestions that membership of partizan societies is unsuitable in the officers of a National Church, or even that such membership is undesirable in men under authority charged with the delicate and difficult ministry of religion. Let any considering man read the evidence of Lord Halifax, and remember that his Lordship stands at the head of an organization which includes among its members some 4,000 English clergymen, and then ask himself what genuine change in clerical temper and aspirations the proposals of the Commissioners can, on the most liberal estimate of success, be competent to secure. So long as the Theological Colleges retain their "atmosphere," cherish their traditions, and continue to work on the old lines, they will pour into the ranks of the parish clergy men who, in the future as in the past, will think, read, and work as sacerdotalists, having that conception of their office, and building up in the congregations that type of Christian faith and practice. So long as the 'Ritualist" churches are also "schools of the prophets," having attached to them a continuous

succession of newly-ordained men who, drawn thither by their own sympathies and choice, are officially required to learn *there* the methods of pastoral work, it is surely vain to expect that there will be any considerable alteration in the views and practices of the parochial clergy. The Commissioners have preferred to assume, what indeed the evidence they have published disallows on every page, that the troubles are with few exceptions an affair of individual eccentricity or misdemeanour, not a serious matter of religious tendency and deliberate plan. Yet it will hardly be doubted that the roots of the clerical procedure which has disturbed the public mind, and compelled the appointment of the Commission, lie in the conditions under which men are trained for, and in, the Ministry. While those conditions remain, the clerical procedure will remain, however the specific illegalities implied in it may vary. The supremacy of the sacerdotalist conception of Christianity in the ranks of the English clergy is the result of the astute policy of securing control of the machinery of clerical education, which has been steadily pursued by the leaders of the High Church party for fifty years past.

Leaving out of view, then, the principal issue, the Commissioners address themselves to the relatively unimportant question, what specific practices shall be selected for immediate suppression. It argues less appreciation of the facts than might have been expected that they should have tabulated "as being of special gravity and significance" ten practices, with respect to which it may fairly be said either that, from the parishioner's point of view, they have no

importance at all, or that although important they are incapable of suppression. The distinctions, which the Commissioners are careful to make, have no reality save in the minds of technical theologians, and the result of insisting on them would be in practice infinitesimal. Where, for instance, almost the whole service is inaudible, it makes little difference whether "the prayers and ceremonies belonging to the Canon of the Mass" are "interpolated," or only repeated silently by the priest as part of his private devotions. So long as "a consecrated wafer or bread" is proposed for "adoration," it matters little enough what formula accompanies the act, or whether there is any formula at all. The evidence proves to demonstration that reservation of the Sacrament under conditions which do *not* lead to its adoration is, in the present temper of those who press for reservation, and on their principles, altogether impossible. The "Mass of the Pre-sanctified" does not enter into the normal practice of the churches, and its suppression would effect no apparent change. Since the Commissioners are prepared to concede *some* observance of the Festival of Corpus Christi, it cannot be a point of any practical importance that the "Corpus Christi processions with the Sacrament" should be disallowed. "Benediction with the Sacrament" stands or falls with "reservation": concede the latter, and it is only a matter of time when reverence will compel the former. Since every clergyman disavows for himself "the intent that there shall be no communicant except the celebrant," it is clear that the proposal to suppress by the strong arm of the law all Celebrations of the Holy Eucharist so conditioned will involve no

practical change at all. The other points—invocation of, or confession to, the Blessed Virgin Mary, or the Saints, observance of the festivals of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the Sacred Heart, the veneration of images and roods—are of little practical importance, since partly they lie outside the public worship, which alone comes within the control of the law, and partly they are incapable of precise definition. The Commissioners must know little, less than their published evidence can tell them, of ecclesiastical opinion, if they suppose than any clergyman, however "extreme," would admit that *his* "observance of All Souls' Day or of the festival of Corpus Christi . . . inculcates or implies the Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory" or transubstantiation. The sonorous sentences in which they declare inflexible hostility to all these "grave and significant" practices must not delude the public into supposing that any effectual action would result from the adoption of their recommendations. There is no need for the "extremest" Ritualist to feel the slightest alarm when he reads these uncompromising words:—

> We desire to express our opinion that these practices should receive no toleration; and that, if Episcopal directions for their prevention or repression are not complied with, the Bishops should take or permit coercive disciplinary action in the Church Courts for that purpose. Further, in the case of these practices, it is, in our opinion, unnecessary and undesirable to postpone proceedings until the reforms which we have recommended in connection with the Final Court of Appeal in ecclesiastical causes and the Diocesan and Provincial Courts can be carried into effect (page 75).

The suppression of these ill-sounding but really unimportant practices constitutes the whole of the

relief which the Commissioners can offer to the public mind. Everything else is contingent on fresh legislation, and contemplates a great re-arrangement of the ecclesiastical system. It is abundantly evident, then, that the only important aspect of the Report is that which it may possess as the outlining of a policy on which the Heads of the Hierarchy have decided to embark, and, accordingly, it is of the utmost consequence that the true character and probable effect of that policy should be perceived by the public. The view of the ecclesiastical situation which underlies the recommendations is indicated in Chapter xi. of the Report, and must be steadily kept in mind throughout any serviceable examination of them.

> Our consideration of the evidence laid before us has led us to two main conclusions. First, the law of public worship in the Church of England is too narrow for the religious life of the present generation. It needlessly condemns much which a great section of Church people, including many of her most devoted members, value; and modern thought and feeling are characterized by a care for ceremonial, a sense of dignity in worship, and an appreciation of the continuity of the Church which were not similarly felt at the time when the law took its present shape. In an age which has witnessed an extraordinary revival of spiritual life and activity, the Church has had to work under regulations fitted for a different condition of things, without that power of self-adjustment, which is inherent in the conception of a living Church, and is, as a matter of fact, possessed by the Established Church of Scotland. The result has inevitably been that ancient rubrics have been strained in the desire to find in them meanings which it has been judicially held they cannot bear; while, on the other hand, the construction placed on them in accordance with legal rules has sometimes appeared forced and unnatural. With an adequate power of self-adjustment, we might reasonably expect that revision of the strict letter of the law would be undertaken with such due regard for the

> living mind of the Church as would secure the obedience of many, now dissatisfied, who desire to be loyal and would justify the Church, as a whole, in insisting on the obedience of all (pages 75, 76).

There appears to be a confusion of ideas running through this paragraph. When it is affirmed that the existing law of public worship in the Church of England is too narrow for the religious life of the present generation because, on the one hand, it "needlessly condemns much which a great section of Church people value," and because, on the other hand, it fails to satisfy modern thought and feeling with respect to ceremonial, dignity in worship, and the continuity of the Church, the suggestion seems to be that, if the "needless condemnation" were cancelled, the demands of "modern thought and feeling" would the better be satisfied. In the actual circumstances this suggestion appears to mean that, if the system of the fifteenth century Church had not been so effectually set aside by the Reformers, their work would be the better suited to the needs of the Church in the twentieth century. This is a manifest paradox, yet the language of the Commissioners suggests nothing else. What is it, then, which the law condemns and discontented Churchmen require? Is it anything other than those very practices and doctrines which have so provoked the public patience that the Royal Commission was appointed to discover some method of restraining them? Does the "extraordinary revival of spiritual life and activity," which the Commissioners attribute to the nineteenth century, really suffer from the prohibition of mediæval ceremonies

which the Statute-book declares and the law-courts exist to enforce? Does a "living Church" really exhibit its "inherent" power of "self-adjustment" by a process of self-stultification, of reversion to an earlier and deliberately abandoned phase of ecclesiastical life? What procedure of the Established Church of Scotland bears any resemblance to such procedure as would be necessary, if the "self-adjustment" of the Church of England were to satisfy the aspirations confessed in the language of Lord Halifax and other representative "Ritualists"? "Self-adjustment," we may observe, is a process which may be effected in many ways. "The living mind of the Church" has other channels of expression than those prescribed by the statutes which determine its legal constitution, and, in point of fact, the Church of England has adapted itself to the changing conditions of its spiritual work quite as easily and quite as successfully as the sister Church of Scotland. It may, or it may not, be desirable to revise the constitutional machinery, to give more power to Convocation, or to take away such shadow of power as Convocation retains, but it is as certain as can be that the self-adjusting power of the living Church will be exercised under any and every system, and is independent of all system. The Commissioners proceed:—

> Secondly, the machinery for discipline has broken down. The means of enforcing the law in the Ecclesiastical Courts, *even in matters which touch the Church's faith and teaching*, are defective and in some respects unsuitable. They have been tried and have often failed; and probably on that account they have been too much neglected. Although attempts to deal administratively with ritual

> irregularity have been made, they have been unsuccessful, in some cases on account of the lack of firmness of those who made them, but also largely because, in regard to the rites and ceremonies of public worship, the law gives no right or power to discriminate between small and great matters (page 76).

We have italicized the sentence which refers to "the Church's faith and teaching," because it is precisely in the cardinal matter of doctrinal liberty that the self-adjustment of the National Church to new conditions has been most apparent and most successful. The hollowness of the argument for Ritualism, based on the necessity of "self-adjustment," is nowhere more conspicuous than in this particular, for in no respect does the sixteenth century stand in sharper contrast to the twentieth than in the handling of theological questions. Doctrinal fixedness was the dream of the earlier age and inspired the numerous confessions of faith, and the fierce penalties with which their subscription was guarded. Doctrinal fluidity is the assumption of the present time, and has determined the relaxation of legal subscriptions in both the Established Churches of Great Britain. The Commissioners mention, as an object to be kept in view whenever Convocation attempts to re-cast the Ornaments Rubric, the securing of "the greater elasticity which a reasonable recognition of the comprehensiveness of the Church of England and of its present needs seems to demand," but they hardly seem conscious of the risks which their proposals involve to that doctrinal liberty which in the course of time has come to be the most distinctive and the most honourable characteristic of the National Church. If

the ritual liberty, which is demanded by the "extreme" clergy, were really such as the spiritual needs of the present time require, it would not be steadily united in their advocacy with the most vehement hostility to the doctrinal liberty which has already been secured. Thus a denunciation of the rigidity of the sixteenth century assorts ill with a passionate maintenance of the rubric which orders the public recitation of the Athanasian Creed, and an argument for self-adjustment to modern conditions of thought and life in the article of worship loses all semblance of sincerity, when it is combined with an eager demand for strong measures against Biblical critics and doctrinal latitudinarians. Moreover, it is important to remember that the doctrinal liberty which now obtains in the National Church, and which makes the Christian ministry still accessible to men educated in the modern sense of the word, has been gained in circumstances which reflect no credit on the clergy of England as a body. Whenever the attempt has been made to restrict liberty of thought and speech within the ranks of the clergy, that attempt has been able to count on the enthusiastic approval of the hierarchy. The law courts of the State alone have stood between the National Church and the intolerance of its leaders, and Parliament has paralyzed the bigotry of Convocation. As if to bring the lesson home to all sections of the Church, all sections in turn have been exposed to the same risk, and all have received deliverance from the same source. In the Gorham case, the Evangelical secured his *locus standi* in the Established Church: in the Essays and Reviews case, the Latitu-

dinarian made good his footing: in the Bennett case, the High Churchman found protection from his rivals. Through the quiet action of the State, applying to the interpretation of the Formularies those just maxims and tolerant dispositions which govern the civil procedure of a free nation, the Church of England has come to be the most comprehensive Church in the world, the least bigoted, the most averse to persecution. It may well be thought that a large measure of disciplinary confusion were a small price to pay for so great a boon, that nothing short of necessity ought to make English Churchmen consent to alter a system under which their best possession—doctrinal liberty—has been secured, that evident advantages should attach to any suggested alternative which could secure their acceptance. When, however, we examine the proposals of the Commissioners, the risks to Anglican liberty are manifest, but the compensating securities against ritual disorder are the flimsiest conceivable. The first stage is to be the enactment of a new Rubric to take the place of the notorious "Ornaments Rubric."

> Letters of Business should be issued to the Convocations with instructions: (*a*) to consider the preparation of a new rubric regulating the ornaments (that is to say, the vesture) of the ministers of the Church at the times of their ministrations, *with a view to its enactment by Parliament;* and (*b*) to frame, *with a view to their enactment by Parliament*, such modifications in the existing law relating to the conduct of Divine Service and to the ornaments and fittings of churches as may tend to secure the greater elasticity which a reasonable recognition of the comprehensiveness of the Church of England and of its present needs seems to demand. It would be most desirable for the early dealing with these

important subjects that the Convocations should sit together, and we assume that they would take counsel with the Houses of Laymen.

The reference to Parliament is curiously phrased. Does it imply that the National Legislature must take or leave the proposals of Convocation, and may not amend them? There can be little, if any, doubt that it is intended to propose the sanctioning of the Eucharistic Vestments, and no doubt at all that, with whatever amount of discussion and resistance, Convocation will adopt the proposal. So great a concession to the sacerdotalist minority will of course be accompanied by some limitation of the "autocracy of the Incumbent"; and this can hardly be so framed as to command the immediate and spontaneous acceptance of Parliament. To the present writer the notion that Parliament will pass unaltered the propositions agreed upon by the Houses of Convocation appears altogether unlikely. Thus the old dilemma emerges again. A new Rubric which received its final shape at the hands of Parliament would *ipso facto* be commended to the contempt of all those clergy who now decline to obey the law on the plea that the authority of the courts is not "spiritual." Disobedience would still be as conscientious as ever.

The Commissioners recommend that "in regard to the sanction to be given for the use of additional and special services, collects and hymns, the law should be so amended as to give wider scope for the exercise of a regulative authority," and this authority is to be "exercised within prescribed limits by the archbishops and bishops of both provinces acting together." The

ordinary layman will, perhaps, fail to understand how large a restriction of existing liberty these recommendations imply. Because a handful of Ritualists have adopted services inconsistent with the principles of the English Church, it is proposed to abolish the freedom of action which all incumbents now enjoy, and which the most part of them use wisely. It is not without significance that the High Church bishops, whose evidence before the Commission is by no means the least illuminating and suggestive material contained in this remarkable Blue-book, are very insistent on the need of episcopal control over hymns. They seem to indemnify themselves for whatever they may be driven to say against the Ritualist services by dark allusions to the doctrinal defects of Evangelical hymns! The important point is the singular combination in this Report of the argument for larger liberty than the Rubrics contemplate, and the proposal that the existing liberty shall be curtailed. The contradiction runs through all the Commissioners' recommendations, and it reveals the conflicting objects with which they were drafted and subscribed. A desire to indicate "a short and easy way" with Ritualists combines oddly with a purpose of remodelling the National Church on the lines of high Episcopalian theory. There is a disposition to attribute to the comparative independence of the incumbent the ritual disorder, which has its roots in the very ecclesiastical theory which exalts bishops above the law.

At every point the bishop's hands are to be strengthened, whether against patrons or against incumbents. The existing liberty to adapt his

ministry to the multitudinous needs which pastoral experience will disclose is for the most part transferred from the incumbent to the bishop. Instead of a range of experiment, unlimited by law outside the parish church, and within the parish church limited only, so far as occasional services are concerned, by the broad considerations of fundamental loyalty and good sense, the incumbent is in the future, if ever the plan of the Commissioners becomes the legal system of the National Church, to be tied down to a selection of Episcopally-authorized forms of service. He is offered, in fact, a supplementary Prayer Book to serve all purposes which now he freely provides for according to his own sense of what is necessary and convenient. It is not suggested that this liberty has been generally, or even largely, abused ; on the contrary, the Commissioners definitely assert that in the main it has been loyally exercised. Rather it is the case that occasion is found in the present discontent with the Ritualist clergy to put forward a project for transforming the whole position of the parochial incumbent. This transformation of the independent parish priest into what can only be described as an episcopal curate has a striking parallel in the procedure of the modern Roman Church. Ever since the Vatican Council centred all power in the Papacy, there has been, we are assured by those who know, a sustained policy of subjecting the parish clergy to the bishops. The comparatively independent status of the parish priest is rapidly giving place throughout the Roman sphere to the wholly subordinate status of curates or commissioners,

removable at the bishop's will. Before a similar process of diocesan concentration is approved by English Churchmen, it is important that they should appreciate its tendency and probable effect. At first view it must be admitted that there is something surprising in a proposal to shackle the existing liberty of incumbents, made avowedly in the interest of ecclesiastical elasticity. Why, it may fairly be asked, should a return be made now to the scrutinizing and inquisitorial system of the Tudor and Stuart epochs? The reasons for such close supervision have ceased. There is no longer any political significance in ritual. The parochial clergy and the bishops are no longer parted by so wide a difference of intellectual quality and theological knowledge. If the position of bishops has declined and that of incumbents has risen, the circumstance does but reflect the unquestioned fact that the competence of the latter has greatly increased. To subordinate the incumbent once again to the old inquisitorial system is irrational on the face of it; to do so in the avowed interest of greater liberty is actually grotesque. It will not be denied by anyone who knows the English clergy that they would greatly resent the loss of parochial independence. That independence is the compensation for many disadvantages; it is the magnet which attracts to the Anglican ministry those men of a robust and manly type who are the least likely in the world to find any satisfaction in the feminine ceremonialism which the Report describes. Its destruction will deprive the hierarchy of its best and most virile elements. Let it be known that,

before a young man can be admitted to ordination, he has to answer the interrogations of a bishop over and above the doctrinal subscriptions required by the law, that he is to enter on his ministry bound by all manner of private, personal pledges apart from his public obligations, that when he goes to work in his parish, he will be required to refer at every turn to his bishop for direction, or for the sanction of some simple service, or for permission to cease the futile practice of reading daily service in an empty church, or for leave to carry the Sacrament from Church to an adjacent cottage, or in short for any other of the many little contingencies of parochial duty in which every man capable of doing a man's work in the world *must* be competent to determine for himself; finally, let it be known that the doctrine of the Church of England which he is required to teach is not merely that which is set down in the creeds and formularies which he has deliberately subscribed, but also whatever else may be decided by a majority of the bishops to be such in any trial for heresy which individual indiscretion, or persecuting bigotry, may originate in the future; and it needs no prophetic vision to discern the rapid alienation from the hierarchy of every man of strong personality and independent mind. We have indicated an objection to the proposal that the final authority on doctrine in the National Church should be that of a majority of the bishops. The recommendation of the Commissioners runs as follows :—

> Where, in an appeal before the Final Court which involves charges of heresy or breach of ritual, any question

> touching the doctrine or use of the Church of England shall be in controversy, which question is not in the opinion of the Court governed by the plain language of documents having the force of Acts of Parliament, and involves the doctrine or use of the Church of England proper to be applied to the facts found by the Court, such question shall be referred to an Assembly of the Archbishops and Bishops of both Provinces, who shall be entitled to call in such advice as they may think fit; and the opinion of the majority of such assembly of the Archbishops and Bishops with regard to any question so submitted to them shall be binding on the Court for the purpose of the said appeal.

This proposal to reconstitute the Final Court with a view to satisfying the requirements of ecclesiastical theory is by far the most serious, and—when the whole circumstances are passed under review—by far the most revolutionary, which the Report contains. We may add that there is none which may more readily be accepted as neither serious in itself nor revolutionary in its principle. For the plain man naturally cares little how a Court is constituted so long as it serves its purpose, and the immediate purpose being to secure the obedience of the Ritualist clergy to some Court, he is not indisposed to grant them any Court they like on condition that they obey it. If, however, the plain man could be shown, first, that on Ritualist principles there is no real probability of any better obedience being rendered to the new Court than was rendered to the old, and, secondly, that the process of reconstruction draws far greater interests into peril than any which the Ritualist disorders have threatened, it may be hoped that he will hesitate before accepting the proposal of the Report. As to the first point it will be sufficient to refer to the evidence given before the Commissioners by the re-

presentatives of Ritualism. That evidence is clear, categorical and recorded. If, in spite of the positive declarations therein made by the very persons concerned, anyone be willing to proceed on the assumption that the adoption of the Commissioners' proposal would bring order into the Church, we may admire his sanguine disposition, but must decline to account him a competent adviser in practical affairs. The second, and greatly more important point claims more detailed consideration.

A careful study of the evidence tendered by Sir Lewis Dibdin will sufficiently indicate the lines on which the Commissioners have proceeded. It is shown by an elaborate legal argument that the existing Final Court lacks "spiritual" authority in the technical sense of the phrase. It is argued that this was not the case with the old Court of the Delegates, which preceded the Judicial Committee, or with the High Commission Court, which in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was generally replaced by the Court of Delegates. It is concluded that the restoration of a "spiritual" character to the Final Court would satisfy the clerical conscience and secure clerical obedience. When we inquire wherein consists this crucial attribute of "spirituality," we are told that it depends wholly on the source from which the Court derives its jurisdiction. If the judges draw their authority from the King they are secular, if from the bishops they are "spiritual." They may be the same individuals, but the method of their appointment either makes their decisions binding on the consciences of Christian men, or commends those very

decisions to Christian men's conscientious contempt. The justice or injustice of the decisions is altogether irrelevant to the issue whether or not they are "spiritual." When, further, we inquire the reason why the bishops are assumed to be the sole fountains of "spiritual" authority, we are referred (so at least it seems to be implied, if not clearly stated) to the Mediæval Canon law, which, however, at every point depends on the Papacy, having in fact taken shape during the dominance of papal influence, and being commonly inspired by the highest views of papal prerogative. The legal basis of the theory is found in the Mediæval Canon Law, but the theological justifications are bound up with the dogma known as that of the "Apostolic Succession," itself the creature of a demonstrably inaccurate reading of the facts of primitive Christianity. The theory, moreover, does not really meet the case, for the primitive Church had no experience of all those circumstances which we conveniently gather under the term "national." Even allowing that the Episcopate is by divine appointment the Final Authority in all questions of doctrine, that Episcopate must surely belong to the whole Christian Church, not merely to such portion of it as is gathered within a single kingdom. A National Church, *quâ* spiritual authority, cannot but be subject to the larger whole of which it forms part, and if the whole question be reduced to Episcopal decisions, then it would appear that the old polemical formula has some relevance after all, and Christians must take account of the general sense of the entire Episcopate, "*Securus judicat orbis terrarum.*" Assuredly the

English Reformation cannot possibly be defended on these lines.

There is a disposition in some quarters to invest the diocese with the attributes of the Catholic Church, that is, to adopt a quasi-Ignatian view of the ecclesiastical system, with the Cyprianic theory thrown in. The ultimate reason of the bishop's authority is referred to his "representative" character, and on this conception of the Episcopal office the invidious term "sacerdotal" is vigorously repudiated, and the whole scheme of sacred autocracy dressed out with a plentiful array of democratic phrases. But the "representative" theory of the Episcopal office has been most gravely affected by the course of religious development in England since the Reformation. In the sixteenth century the entire society of baptized persons owned the spiritual authority of the bishops, and it was not until the domestic conflicts of more than a century had demonstrated the final ending of the old unanimity, that the Church of England avowedly ceased to represent the whole Christian society within the realm. At the present time it is calculated, on a reasonable estimate of the facts, that half the "practizing Christians" in the country repudiate the spiritual authority of the bishops. What in this case becomes of their "representative" character, and of the spiritual authority built on it? Manifestly the argument turns back to the purely sacerdotal conception of the Christian ministry. The bishop's authority is held to be inherent in his Order, and the acceptance or non-acceptance of the Christian society is essen-

tially irrelevant to the discussion. It follows that, on the principles which require the reconstitution of the Final Court as recommended by the Commissioners, the Ritualist would be justified in refusing obedience to any decision of the English bishops which in his judgment contravened the general teaching of the Episcopate as a whole, and that the same conception of the Christian ministry as that which identified "spiritual" and Episcopal would authenticate also the sacerdotalism of the mediæval canons, and justify all the practical inferences which incumbents might care to draw for themselves in the conduct of their parishes.

The full gravity of the formal adoption of high Episcopalian theory is seen when the specific case of doctrinal decision is considered. On this view of their office, bishops cannot possibly bring an unbiassed judgment to bear on the questions submitted to them. They are the divinely-appointed guardians of a tradition, not responsible inquirers, or students, or religious statesmen. They are tied and bound by the multitudinous decisions of Councils and the dogmata of Fathers; they go to work with a powerful presumption that whatsoever is new is also false, and that whatsoever disturbs the convenient repose of the faithful is also inadmissible and impolitic. Let any man who has made himself familiar with the history of Episcopal action in the Church, as a whole, and especially in the Church of England, ask himself whether for the purpose of adjudicating on theological developments, saying what may and what may not be taught in the pulpits of the National Church,

the bishops are competent to do justice. What would have been the judgment of the Episcopal Bench in the Gorham case, or in the Bennett case, or in the case of "Essays and Reviews"? The last is perhaps the type of doctrinal issue most likely to be raised in the future. Questions of Biblical criticism and doctrinal questions as arising therefrom, are being raised in every Christian Church at the present time, and the handling of those questions determines the quality of a church, whether it is competent to satisfy the intellectual demands of a transitional age, or whether it elects to resist the march of the human mind, and to fall out of the movement of civilized society. It is not for one moment disputed that when such questions are raised they must be adjudicated upon; nor is it contended that a Church can dispense with some effective machinery for preserving itself against the invasion of destructive teaching, but it is urged that, in all the circumstances of the present time, there is much need for a wide tolerance and for a willingness to consider fairly and without prejudice the new issues which are being raised, not by the perverse self-will of individuals, but by the growth of human knowledge. For this purpose the bishops, *ex hypothesi* acting as "spiritual" persons, that is, with all the limitations inherent in that character, are notably and apparently unfit. For purposes of administration the bishops are equipped with a measure of legal authority. That measure may be inadequate. It would appear that the Commissioners desire to increase it in certain directions. That proposition raises no question of principle. So long as the reign of the law is secure, the distribution

of authority by the law is a matter of expediency, which may be discussed on its merits. But when the ultimate issue of the source of authority is raised, and the proposition is made that the validity of legal decisions *in foro conscientiae* depends, not on their intrinsic justice, but on the character of the judges, then the door is opened to controversy of the most serious character conceivable. It is no smaller issue that has been raised by this Report. If anyone doubt the fact let him be at the pains to read the volumes of evidence before passing judgment on the recommendations. The evidence of the bishops is particularly important, for mainly it consisted of suggestions for alterations of the law, and statements of the reasons why such alterations were desired. As one reads the outspoken declarations of men, who if the Commissioners' Report were adopted by the State, would have the last word on all doctrinal questions, the thought inevitably occurs to the mind, that one consequence of that arrangement would be a change in the type of men raised to the Bench. The bishops at present are quite frankly partizans, not of course in their legal administration, where no doubt complete impartiality prevails, but in their personal convictions, which they freely express, and in their personal influence, which they freely exercise. Some of them are the literary champions of partizan views and aims. How could it be decently proposed, that such men should sit as judges on matters with respect to which they may have declared their opinion, and over persons with whom they may actually have contended in controversial conflict? Take such a matter as that of the degree of authority which attaches to

the Athanasian Creed. It is not hard to see that a case might easily occur in which that very point would arise and, on the scheme of the Report, be referred for final determination to the bishops, yet it is notorious that the very sharpest antagonism exists even on the present Episcopal Bench on the subject. What equity would there be in requiring an incriminated clergyman to go before such a tribunal? What mockery to tell him that "spiritual" authority attached to the dicta pronounced judicially, which already he had disputed, and believed himself to have disproved! At a given point in controversy the Episcopal combatant would exchange the weapons of the polemical divine for the robes of the judge, and his opponent would suddenly sink into the prisoner at the bar! Public decency will require that no man shall be promoted to the Episcopate of the future who has committed himself in controversy, or whose opinions on matters of doctrinal debate are well ascertained. What effect such a rule would have in lowering the personal weight of the Bench is a speculation which must be referred to men's private judgment. Assuredly on the implied assumption that known partizanship incapacitates for judicial functions, there would be few living bishops who could be adjudged competent for their new functions. One bishop at least is conscious of the incongruity of the present freedom of Episcopal self-expression and the high judicial tasks which the Commissioners would place on Episcopal shoulders in the future. The Bishop of Hereford is held to be a Broad Churchman. That is a character which

would predispose him in favour of liberty in all cases, yet it might well seem to disqualify him for the confidence of High Churchmen in any case of doctrine. With far more justice would Broad Churchmen suspect the impartiality of judges who were known to be strong High Churchmen, for the principles of the latter are inconsistent with doctrinal liberty. However, it is the Bishop of Hereford who declares his belief that bishops are not well adapted to be judges. His lordship's evidence is so germane to the whole drift of this argument that it may be with advantage reproduced at some length.

21,270. (ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.) You wish to say also something about things which you would desire to see recognized if the Church is to be maintained as a National Church?—Yes. For the future good of our Church as a reformed, and what I may venture to call a progressive Church, and for its maintenance as a National Church, I feel that there are certain things which are of great importance. In the first place, hitherto the rule, as I understand it, has been to give as much freedom of thought and opinion as possible, as distinct from observances, bearing in mind that the principle of the Reformation is to lay stress on freedom of conscience and personal responsibility; and therefore the spirit of our Church has been to interfere as little as possible with freedom of thought, and to give as liberal an interpretation as possible to our formularies. I think all sides and parties in the Church will benefit by a strict adherence to that principle. Then, secondly, I should desire to maintain simplicity of worship, otherwise I think the gravest dangers will come in the course of no very long time, unless we hold on to the principle of simplicity of worship. Now, to do all this, I cannot help feeling that to maintain these principles the line of demarcation between our Church and Rome must be kept as a clearly-defined line; and what I feel to be the greatest danger in the Ritualistic movement is that it tends to blur and destroy this line of demarcation. Their innovations are in the direction of Roman usage almost exclusively, and therefore

on that ground alone I think they are to be deprecated, and I should like to see them stopped on that ground. . . . I do not suppose that our good friends—many of them my own good friends—mean to Romanize the Church : but I believe that their success would be its Romanization, and that we have to remember all the time that there is this Roman Church standing at our gates ready to take advantage of every opportunity. Therefore, while I would do nothing to narrow the law of the Church, and present circumstances must be recognized—I would do nothing to narrow the law of the Church on any side, I would be for extending if possible—yet I feel that it would be a very dangerous thing to enlarge or relax the law on this side : and by the law of course I mean as it has been interpreted in our highest Courts, that is my meaning of the law of the Church of England. *I should like to add to what I have just been saying, that I should strongly deprecate any such change in the Advisory Court of the Crown as would take the final advice in the case of ecclesiastical appeals out of the hands of great lawyers who have been trained in the investigation of evidence, as we bishops and clergy have not been trained, and who are in the habit of forming dispassionate and impartial judgments. I think it has been seen in the history of our Church in the last half-century, that almost every party would have suffered if we had not had trained and great lawyers to interpret the law.* And, lastly, with regard to the Nonconformist side, I would venture to submit that if we are to maintain the national character of our Church, that is, by keeping the spirit of its services, I do not mean the exact form, but the whole spirit of its services and practices as fully as may be in harmony with the general sentiments and convictions of the people at large, we should take care to avoid all risk of widening the gulf between us and the evangelical Nonconformists.

21,271. That is the reverse of the view you take about Rome?—Yes. If there is to be expansion at all, the wise national policy is to expand so as to absorb as much of Nonconformity as possible.

21,272. Would it represent your view to say that the line of demarcation against Rome should be a very clearly-defined one, but that the line against Nonconformity should be a blurred one?—It should be, I think, a more elastic one, probably.

21,273. (BISHOP OF OXFORD.) What is the distinction between a blurred and a more elastic line?—Perhaps I

may have used an unfortunate expression, but by a blurred line, what was in my mind was, this tendency to imitate Roman services, to assimilate Roman usages, and perhaps to preach Roman doctrine in some cases with regard to the Sacraments. All that, I think, does tend to blur the line of distinction between our own Church and the Church of Rome.

21,274. (ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.) Would you apply that also to Nonconformity?—I do not think there is any danger of our doing that on the Nonconformist side. The circumstances are different. We have not the same danger on the Nonconformist side; because what we have specially to aim at on the side of Nonconformity, it seems to me, is to keep our worship simple, and to base ourselves on the Scripture, and as far as possible in other matters helping to do away with anything which they could consider a grievance. If you could thus clear the field, the attractiveness of our Church would be such a power that I have no doubt at all that in a generation we should absorb a great deal of Nonconformity. And the way in which I put it in my *précis* is this: that the policy of our Church should be, so far as possible, a policy tending towards what is called home re-union, by maintaining the reformed character of our Church, by resisting this back current towards mediævalism and Romanism, by emphasizing our reliance on Holy Scripture, and by trusting to the attractive power of our historical Church thus maintained. I think it is in all this that we have the best hope of winning back a great portion of Nonconformity, and so perpetuating our Church as the Church of the nation. This is what is in my mind. I am afraid the policy of drifting in the other direction would be drifting towards Niagara. I have nothing more that I desire to say, except that I feel intensely the great difficulties of the present situation in the continued growth of practices and of a certain spirit, symbolizing doctrine, which is hardly within the pale of our Church, indeed, essentially at variance with the Reformation settlement.

The Bishop proceeds to illustrate his words by a description of an early celebration of the Holy Communion in "a south coast watering-place."

Now what struck me was this. I wish to repeat that it was all very reverent, and to persons accustomed to that

> form of service there was nothing objectionable in any way; but I felt that here we have a form of service—this is a quiet service, remember—such as was probably going on that morning in scores of churches along that coast, here in London, in some provincial towns and in very rare churches here and there in the country, and it represents a spirit of service which, so far as my experience and observation go, is entirely out of harmony with the general sentiment of the English people, and with all the traditions of our Reformed Church; and if that is to be established as anything like a predominant type of our English Church service, I think we may say farewell to any hope of extending our Church on the Evangelical side as a National Church. I think there will be only one result: that the great part of the nation will go off to what are called the Free Churches.

These are weighty words, and they carry a warning which the friends of the National Church cannot afford to neglect. Contrast with them the outspoken plea for the very things which are here described, offered with characteristic fervour by another Bishop, the most influential and not the least effective leader of the High Church party. Bishop Gore's autobiographical touches give a personal interest to his evidence, which sets one thinking.

> I was what people called a Ritualist from the time I was a boy, and I have been more interested, I suppose, in this subject through all the time of my growing up into manhood than in almost any other. I was full, in all the time when one forms one's young enthusiasms, of this particular plea, and of all that was involved in it; and what I have felt all my life—passionately—has been that here was this plea being made by those whom I most venerated, and being made in a form which appeared to me to be profoundly Scriptural, to correspond profoundly with the claim of the Church of England to antiquity, and at the same time I felt, as I read bishop's charge after bishop's charge, or utterance after utterance in Parliament,

> that this plea was never being adequately faced in its implication. And the result of course has been that, though I have lived all my life among people who certainly were as indisposed as any Englishman can be to be lawless, I have known, as nobody could know it better, why it is that legislation and episcopal charges and demands have failed to carry effect; why we have got on the High Church side, so far as it has come about, into a condition of lawlessness (vol. II., page 500).

The plea seems to be that for almost the whole duration of its existence the National Church has been unconscious of its own system, that until the Tractarian movement Anglicanism slumbered in the rubrics, and that only the awakening of the rubrics to active operation can bring peace to our Israel.

> In fact the Prayer Book with the Articles embodies a high spiritual ideal. Emphasis is laid, not once, but four or five times, on the performance of two daily services; on notice to be given of fast days and feast days, and on their proper observances; on the spiritual discipline on offenders of excommunication, penance, and reconciliation. It is quite certain that not only the Ornaments Rubric, but a great number of other Rubrics of the kind just alluded to, became more or less a dead letter from the first, and that the efforts of the bishops were directed to obtaining a minimum of conformity on the part of the clergy and laity. Partly from Puritan opposition, partly from spiritual indolence, the actual practice of the Church has mostly lain a great distance below the ideal and law of the Prayer Book.

This being the case, the Bishop's plea is that the National Church should at the eleventh hour revert to its rubrics, and by obeying them at once justify the "lawless" clergy, and become ecclesiastically efficient.

> With regard to details, I think a bishop, acting purely and simply by his inherent episcopal authority, might

> curtail and restrain the license which at present exists and produce gradually a very tolerable degree, as I should regard it, of ceremonial conformity. He would be assisted by the growing knowledge as to the history and meaning of ceremonial which is gradually taking the place of the ignorance under which in many respects the ritualistic movement developed; but if this is to be done, it is, in my judgment, quite essential that a certain type of worship, symbolized by what are known as the six points, should be accepted as legitimate, in part in all churches—wholly in some churches. (*a*) The eastward position, one of the most disputable points rubrically, I suppose, has been accepted and allowed, as I venture to think, as a *fait accompli*. (*b*) The use of Eucharistic vestments, as directed in the first Prayer Book, must be at least allowed as legitimate (vol. II., page 501).

There is much else which is eminently worth reading, but we have quoted enough to exhibit the dramatic completeness of the contrast between the two bishops. What the Bishop of Hereford regards with alarm, and holds to be destructive of the National Church, the Bishop of Birmingham proposes as the true Anglican practice, and looks forward to as the solution of existing problems. The Commissioners would probably dissociate themselves from Bishop Gore's reading of Anglican history, and some of them certainly do not agree with his conception either of the Anglican system or of the needs of the present time, but they have thrown their weight into his scale rather than into that of the Bishop of Hereford, and have endorsed his exalted Episcopalianism. Yet we believe that Bishop Percival is the sounder judge of tendencies and probabilities, and we are constrained to think that the substitution of Divine-right bishops administering their dioceses by inherent episcopal authority for the *régime* of law

can never be reconciled with the traditional independence of the English clergy, or with the religious demands of an essentially Protestant nation. The recommendations of the Commissioners would not secure immediate relief from ecclesiastical disorder, and they would fatally compromise the character of the National Church.

XVII

LETTERS OF BUSINESS

THE second recommendation of the recently-issue Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastica Discipline runs as follows :—

> 2. Letters of Business should be issued to the Convoca tions with instructions : (*a*) to consider the preparation c a new rubric regulating the ornaments (that is to say, th vesture) of the ministers of the Church, at the times c their ministrations, with a view to its enactment by Parlia ment ; and (*b*) to frame, with a view to their enactment b Parliament, such modifications in the existing law relatin to the conduct of Divine Service and to the ornaments an fittings of churches as may tend to secure the greate elasticity which a reasonable recognition of the compre hensiveness of the Church of England and of its presen needs seems to demand.
>
> It would be most desirable for the early dealing witl these important subjects that the Convocations should si together, and we assume that they would take counsel witl the Houses of Laymen.

This recommendation was forthwith acted upon The Government, in compliance with the request o the two Archbishops, advised the King to issue Letters of Business, and, in stating this decision added the significant declaration that " His Majesty's Government retained its complete freedom of judg

ment" as to whether any action should be taken upon the reply of Convocation. Accordingly the Convocations met in the course of November, 1906, and the Archbishop proposed the appointment of a Joint Committee to consider procedure. "Business" is the technical term for making a Canon, and, though Convocation may discuss freely any subject it will, discussion cannot mature into action without the express sanction of the State expressed in formal Letters of Business from the Sovereign. Convocation then, in the words of the *Guardian*:—

> now finds itself committed to the extremely important, but excessively difficult and delicate, task of framing a new Ornaments Rubric, and such modifications in the character of our services as "a reasonable recognition of the comprehensiveness of the Church of England and of its present needs seems to demand." It is a great and grave undertaking, the results of which may conceivably have the most serious influence upon the future of the English Church.

What is Convocation? Who are its members, and how do they acquire their character as such? What are their qualifications for revising the Reformation in those particulars which come most near to the English people, the methods of public worship in the parish churches? What moral authority will attach to their action? Such questions as these will certainly be stirring in many minds, and the present discussion is designed as a slight contribution towards answering them.

I. Origin of Convocation.

The Convocations exist to-day practically as they existed in the thirteenth century when, under the

strong fashioning hand of the English Justinian, they first came into existence. It is worth while to recall the circumstances in which they were called into being. We may learn what these were in the calm and lucid pages of our greatest constitutional historian, Bishop Stubbs. He traces the gradual separation of interest and constitutional procedure between the clergy and the rest of the nation. In the earliest period of the national history there had existed a very intimate association between the two. Bishop and alderman sat side by side in the shiremoot, and, though of course the distinction between spiritual law and secular was recognized in theory, they amalgamated the administration so successfully that in practice there was unity. With the Norman Conquest, which had the character of a Papal crusade, all this was changed. The clergy were professionalized on the approved Roman model, and the long conflict between Church and State on the subject of clerical immunities began. It became an object of clerical ambition to organize the clerical order as a separate estate, which added to the distinctiveness of interest, which marked off one lay estate from another, a mysterious and elastic sanctity of professional character, and thus superimposed a religious right on a political convenience. While this tendency to isolation was powerful among the clergy, there was another tendency of a different character operating in the same direction in the secular sphere. The standing problem of government is always financial, and in the middle ages this was notoriously the case. How to bring all the property of the country under taxation, and to

transfer as much as possible of it out of the pockets of its owners into the royal exchequer, without rousing such resentments as might move them to rebellion and shake the stability of the throne, was the question of questions for a mediæval English king.

> The taxable property of the clergy was either in land, which, whether held by the usual temporal services or in free alms, shared the liability of the rest of the land, or in tithes and offerings. So long as the land only was taxed, the bishops might constitutionally act with the baronage, paying scutages for their military fiefs and carucages for their lands held by other tenure. When taxation began to affect the spiritual revenue, it touched the clergy generally in a point in which the laity had nothing in common with them. It provoked a professional jealousy which later history abundantly justified. Just as the taxation of movables led to the constitutional action of the commons, so the taxation of spirituals developed the constitutional action of the clergy.[1]

In the case of the clergy there were two taxing authorities, the King and the Pope, and these, though sometimes in conflict, were commonly agreed in concerting measures for rendering their common property in clerical possessions as productive as possible. When John ended his long quarrel with the Papacy by surrendering his kingdom, the clergy felt the effects.

> As soon as the pope and king were at peace, the long struggle began between the clergy and their united taskmasters, both of whom saw the wisdom of humouring them in their desire to separate their interests from those of the laity. . . . It was from applications for grants from the spirituality that the custom arose of assembling the clergy in distinct assemblies for secular business, which so largely influenced the history of both Parliament and Convocation. . . . Successive valuations of ecclesiastical property,

[1] *v. Cons., Hist.* II., p. 171.

> spiritual as well as temporal, were made. The discussion of public questions in ecclesiastical assemblies became more frequent as the constitution of those assemblies took form and consistency under oppression. . . . It was by action on these occasions that the clerical estate worked out its distinct organization as an estate of the realm, asserting and possessing deliberative, legislative, and taxing powers, and in so doing provided some not unimportant precedents for Parliamentary action under like circumstances.[1]

Edward I. was both a bold and successful warrior and a legislator of the first order. Perhaps a calm consideration of his work will lead to the conclusion that of all English sovereigns he is best entitled to be called great. His policy abroad reacted on his policy at home. Wars have ever been the most potent instruments for the achievement of civic liberty, for the expenses they entail on those who conduct them compel the subordination of all other interests to the single and indispensable task of raising money. Ultimately on the grand arena of history, as on the lesser stage of private and municipal life, it is the man who pays the piper who calls the tune. Concessions of franchise have accompanied and followed costly wars. That Scotland and Wales might be brought under the sceptre of England, and the political unity of the island secured, the whole wealth of the nation had to be brought under contribution. The House of Commons and the Convocations, and even in some sense the House of Lords, are all the creations of one and the same masterful ruler, and all owed their origin in the first instance to the financial exigencies into which he was brought by the wars he waged.

[1] *v. Ibid.* pp. 174–6.

His first design was to assemble the representatives of the beneficed clergy as members of Parliament, and for some while there was great uncertainty as to the form in which clerical representation should be perpetuated in the constitutional system of the country.

> The National Council, as it existed at the end of the reign of Edward I., was a Parliamentary assembly consisting of three bodies: the clergy represented by the bishops, deans, archdeacons, and proctors; the baronage, spiritual and temporal; the commons of the realm represented by the knights of the shire and the elected citizens and burgesses; and in addition to all these, as attendant on the king and summoned to give counsel, the justices and other members of the continual council.

Bishop Stubbs points out the advantages which followed from the refusal of the clergy thus to sit and vote with the laity:—

> If the clergy had been content to vote their taxes in Parliament instead of Convocation, they might have been involved in a perpetual struggle for equality with the Commons, which would have left both at the mercy of the crown and baronage. By taking their stand on their spiritual vantage ground they lost much of their direct influence in the Parliament itself, but so long as their chiefs sat with the baronage and enjoyed a monopoly of the highest offices of State, they retained more than an equitable share of political power. On the other hand, their resolution to grant money in Convocation only secured for them a certain right of meeting whenever Parliament was called for the same purpose, and that right of meeting involved the right of petitioning and, within certain limits, of legislating for themselves.[1]

Not to labour constitutional antiquities, it suffices for our present purpose to fasten attention on the fact that the dominating consideration, which determined

[1] *v. Ibid.*, p. 195.

the origin and, to some extent, the form of the Co vocations, was the necessity of bringing under taxatic the property of the clergy. It is no doubt the ca that from of old time the clergy had been accustome to meet in synods and councils for the transaction spiritual business, legislation on faith and morals ar other ecclesiastical concerns, and it is certain that th older custom was grafted on to the newer const tutional practice, so that the Convocations came have a double character, and the importance whi attached to them as money-voting bodies was carri over to their action as spiritual assemblies. Still remains important to remember, that the original pu pose, which the Convocations were created to serv no longer exists, and that, to this extent, tho venerable assemblies are truly described as an chronisms. It is difficult for a generation which becoming weary of pathetic descriptions of cleric poverty, and hears nothing more often than earne pleas for increasing the number of the clergy, realize the power and prestige of the mediæv Church of England. If I still quote Bishop Stubb it is because I thus protect myself from all legitima suspicion of exaggeration or even inaccuracy :—

> The social importance of the clergy in England duri the Middle Ages rested on a wider basis than was afford by their constitutional position. The clergy, as a bo were very rich ; the proportion of direct taxation borne them amounted to nearly a third of the whole direct ta ation of the nation ; they possessed in the constitution Parliament and Convocation a great amount of politi power, a majority in the House of Lords, a recogniz organization as an estate of Parliament, and two taxing a legislating assemblies in the provincial Convocations ; th

had on their great estates jurisdictions and franchises equal to those of the great nobles, and in the spiritual courts a whole system of judicature, parallel to the temporal judicature but more inquisitorial, more deeply penetrating, and taking cognizance of every act and every relation of men's lives. They had great immunities also, and a corporate cohesion which gave strength and dignity to the meanest member of the class. One result of these advantages was the existence of an exceedingly large number of clergymen, or men in holy orders.[1]

The population of England at the end of the thirteenth century probably did not exceed 2,500,000, and these were ministered to in religion by some 8,000 parish clergy, besides an immense host of stipendiary priests, and the members of about 900 monastic establishments. There are now rather less than 15,000 parish priests, assisted by about 8,000 curates, and besides these parochial clergy there is nothing but a few score professors, lecturers, and schoolmasters. The nation now numbers at least 32,000,000 souls, and its wealth has increased beyond comparison. All these considerations deserve to be taken into account when an attempt is made to estimate the qualification of the Convocations for doing national work, that is, for deciding on matters which affect the national life as a whole. I have sometimes reflected that, in order to secure any adequate parallel to the mediæval Convocation, it would be necessary to combine in a single assembly the representatives of all the learned professions, and add to them some leading diplomatists and literary men. Certainly the great monastic orders, including in that term the mendicants and preachers, are, to

[1] *v. Ibid.*, III., p. 378.

some extent and on their best side, represented in the the modern nation by the Nonconformist Churches, and if a fair representation of the national Christianity were to be secured, such as was secured in the Convocations of the mediæval Church, it would undoubtedly be requisite to include deputies from those churches also. We must, however, abandon speculations of this kind, and examine more closely the actual constitution of the Convocations.

II. Composition of the Convocations.

For convenience' sake I will limit myself to the Convocation of Canterbury, in which I have enjoyed the privilege of a seat for the last four years. The Convocation of York is somewhat more popular in composition, but its smaller numbers and its remoteness from the seat of government have throughout its history reduced its importance. The history of Convocation is practically the history of the Convocation of Canterbury. The members of the latter, according to the officio list of the present house, number 175, of whom 96 are ex-officio, and 79 elected. The composition of the house is as follows:—

25	Deans.
1	Provost (Eton).
70	Archdeacons.
25	Proctors for Chapters.
54	Proctors for Clergy.
175	

It will be seen that of the elected proctors no less

than 25 are representatives of cathedral and collegiate foundations. These, perhaps, should be reckoned among the official members. In that case the respective proportions of ex-officio and elected members will be—

Official	121
Elected	54

If, however, we adopt the more useful classification of parochial and non-parochial, and reckon the archdeacons among the former, we arrive at this result:—

Representatives of the Parochial Clergy	124
Representatives of Cathedral and Collegiate Foundations	51

The Convocation consists of two Houses: the Upper House composed of the Diocesan Bishops, as well Peers of Parliament as not; and the Lower House composed as we have stated. The President of the Convocation is the Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom the Prolocutor of the Lower House is presented on election for approval. In the President's hands almost absolute power is lodged. He draws up the programme of business, and can at any time prorogue the Convocation. The influence of the Bishops in the lower House is very great, for the Archdeacons are their nominees, and they are the fountains of patronage to their clergy, whose representatives, two for each diocese, sit in Convocation. Thus, unquestionably the most independent element in the House is that which represents the Cathedral and Collegiate Foundations. Since the advent of "Christian Democracy" there has been some attempt to import into elections of diocesan representatives

the methods familiar in the field of national politics. Pledges are asked of candidates with respect to subjects of current interest, and, inevitably, in the present circumstances of the Church, these elections tend to be fought on the lines of ecclesiastical party. Thus it is felt that the independence of the parochial representatives is endangered from two sides. They have to reckon with their Bishop on the one hand, and they have to reckon with their party organization on the other. This danger is as yet in its beginnings, but a close student of ecclesiastical affairs would probably attach to it no slight gravity in any forecast of the future.

Voting for diocesan proctors is limited to the parochial incumbents, and this is accounted a defect by some persons. Its explanation and, I think, its justification also, lie in two facts. Convocation having been originally designed with a view to bringing under taxation all clerical endowments, those clergy only were included in it, whether as members or as voters, who were possessed of endowments. Moreover, the unbeneficed clergy are in a transitional state; the greater part of them in due course are preferred to benefices, and although it is the case that there are now a certain number of men advanced in years who are still unbeneficed, it will probably be found that the proportion of them whose professional ill-fortune is unconnected with personal disqualifications is too small to be made the basis of legislation. It is difficult to see what advantage would accrue to Convocation from increasing its number, or enlarging the basis on which its members

are elected. The views of the unbeneficed clergy are well known to their official chiefs, and their opinions on matters of controversy are sufficiently expressed in the party journals.

At one time there was a strong desire in some quarters to introduce into Convocation a lay element, but the hostility of the Tractarians was so vehement that the project was abandoned. A curious letter from Dr. Pusey to Mr. Keble, written in the very year, 1852, which witnessed the resumption by Convocation of its sessions after an interval of no less than 135 years, throws much light on the sentiments of the party which regards Dr. Pusey with veneration as the true exponent of Anglican Christianity :—

> In truth I think that let people guard, how they may, both doctrine and discipline, it can only be for a time. The power of the laity is a growing power. To admit them into synods, and then exclude them from what is to both parties of most real interest, will, I am persuaded, never hold. If Parliament could disown the functions of legislating for the Church, and invest the lay members of the Church with authority to give a civil sanction to the decisions of the ecclesiastical body, this would be something tangible. Anything else would, I am sure, be only preparing for encroachments. *I look with terror on any admission of laity into Synods.* It at once invests them with an ecclesiastical office, which will develop itself sooner or later, I believe, to the destruction of the Faith.[1]

At a later period Archbishop Benson adopted the suggestion of the Tractarian leader and created the Houses of Laymen, which have a dubious place on the threshold of Convocation, and seem to have constituted themselves the champions of their own exclusion from its debates.

[1] *v. Life*, vol. III., p. 346. (The italics are mine.)

III. Powers of Convocation.

Wake, in the course of his controversy with Atterbury on the subject of the history and functions of the Convocations, quotes from the law reports the following opinion of the illustrious Coke, which states succinctly the conditions under which Convocation has existed since the Reformation :—

> It was resolved by the two chief justices, and divers other justices, at a Committee before the Lords in Parliament, divers points concerning the authority of a Convocation :—
>
> 1. That a Convocation cannot assemble at their Convocation without the Assent of the King.
>
> 2. That after their assembly they cannot confer to constitute any canons, without *License del' Roy*.
>
> 3. When they, upon conference, conclude any canons, yet they cannot execute any of their canons without Royal assent.
>
> 4. They cannot execute any after Royal Assent, but with these four limitations :—
>
> I. That they be not against the Prerogative of the King.
>
> II. Nor against the Common Law.
>
> III. Nor against any Statute Law.
>
> IV. Nor against any Custom of the Realm.
>
> And all this (adds the reporter) appears by the Statute 25 Hen. VIII., c. 19. And this was but an Affirmance of what was before the said Statute.[1]

Lathbury, in his well-known *History of the Convocation*, states the powers of that assembly more sympathetically :—

> The powers of Convocation are great. They have power to correct and depose offenders ; to examine and censure heretical works ; and, having obtained the royal

[1] *v. State of the Church*, p. 566. London, 1703.

license, they can make and publish canons, alter the liturgy, and, in short, transact all business of an ecclesiastical character. . . By statute the clergy are protected from arrest, just as the Members of the Parliament, during their attendance on Convocation. . . . .

As soon as the license is issued, a power is given to the Convocation which it did not previously possess, though assembled by royal writ. It is then a provincial Synod, and competent to transact ecclesiastical business. . . . One privilege possessed by the Lower House must not be forgotten. They can exercise a negative on the proceedings of the Upper House. "The greatest power enjoyed by the English clergy in a provincial Synod, beyond the presbyters of other nations, is a negative upon the metropolitan and bishops, none of whose resolutions, either in part or in whole, can be passed into synodical acts without the previous approbation of the inferior clergy." This is a very important privilege. By virtue of their negative voice the clergy would always be able to thwart the proceedings of the bishops ; for were they to refuse their assent, no measures could be carried. The Convocation, therefore, though it cannot enact canons without the authority of the crown, can refuse its assent to measures proposed by the sovereign.[1]

It will be observed that there is no mention here of any right to vote taxes. That power survived the Reformation, and only passed away in the reign of Charles II., when it was surrendered by a verbal arrangement between Archbishop Sheldon and Clarendon. Since that time the clergy have exercised the right of voting for Members of Parliament.

The official doctrine of the Church of England includes a very exalted estimate of the authority of Convocation. This is expressed in the last three Canons of 1604 :—

139. *A National Synod the Church Representative.*
Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, that the sacred Synod of this nation, in the name of Christ and by the

[1] p. 120.

King's authority assembled, is not the true Church England by representation, let him be excommunicate and not restored, until he repent, and publicly revoke th his wicked error.

140. *Synods conclude as well the absent as the presen* Whosoever shall affirm, that no manner of perso either of the clergy or laity, not being themselv particularly assembled in the said sacred Synod, are to b subject to the decrees thereof in causes ecclesiastical (mac and ratified by the King's Majesty's supreme authority), a not having given their voices unto them, let him b excommunicated, and not restored, until he repent, an publicly revoke that his wicked error.

141. *Depravers of the Synod censured.* Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, that the sacre Synod, assembled as aforesaid, was a company of suc persons as did conspire together against godly an religious professors of the Gospel; and that therefore bot they and their proceedings in making of canons and co stitutions in causes ecclesiastical by the King's authority, a aforesaid, ought to be despised and condemned, the sam being ratified, confirmed, and enjoined by the said reg power, supremacy, and authority; let them be excon municated, and not restored, until they repent, and publicl revoke that their wicked error.

There is a curious interest about these canon for they carry unquestionably the full weight of tha "spiritual" authority which is now so ardentl desiderated by the clergy in legal acts. In their ow day they meant a good bit. "As far as in them lay observes Mr. Gardiner, "they bound down the whol of the clergy and laity of England to a perpetu uniformity. Every man was declared to be excommu nicated who questioned the complete accordanc of the Prayer Book with the Word of God. Nc were the terrors of excommunication felt only b those who shrank from bearing spiritual censure The excommunicated person was unable to enforc

the payment of debts which might be due to him, and was himself liable to imprisonment till he confessed his error."[1] It is well for some of us that we have nothing more serious to reckon with than the "spiritual" authority of these grotesque enactments.

Not many years passed before the authority of Convocation thus straitly to bind the English people was sharply and successfully challenged. The occasion is full of melancholy suggestiveness, for it presents a singularly close parallel to that which has now led to the renewal of Convocational activity. We have the record of the Convocation of 1640 in the pages of Heylyn's *Life of Laud*. It is worth remembering that Heylyn was himself a very prominent actor in the proceedings which led to the enactment of the Canons of 1640, and that he was an enthusiastic Anglican of the type which, at a later stage, it became customary to style High Church. The situation in 1640 presented many points of similarity to that which now confronts us. In his Letters Patent, which Laud read to the members at the beginning of the session, Charles I., with his hereditary discursiveness, enlarged on the reasons which had led him to permit the transaction of business; they have an ominously modern sound:—

> Forasmuch as we are given to understand, that many of our subjects being misled against the Rites and Ceremonies now used in the Church of England, have lately taken offence at the same, upon an unjust supposal, that they are not only contrary to our laws, but also introductive unto Popish Superstitions, whereas it well

[1] *v. History*, vol. I., p. 195.

> appeareth unto us, upon mature consideration that the said Rites and Ceremonies which are now so much quarrelled at, were not only approved of, and used by those learned and godly divines to whom at the time of Reformation under King Edward the Sixth, the compiling of the Book of Common Prayer was committed (divers of which suffered Martyrdom in Queen Marie's dayes), but also again taken up by this whole Church under Queen Elizabeth. . .
>
> But forasmuch as we well perceive that the misleaders of our well-minded people do make the more advantage for the nourishing of this distemper among them from hence, that the foresaid Rites and Ceremonies, or some of them, are now insisted upon but only in some Dioceses, and are not generally revived in all places, nor constantly and uniformly practised throughout all the Churches of our Realm, and thereupon have been liable to be quarrelled and opposed by them who use them not: We therefore . . . having fully advised herein with our Metropolitan and with our Commissioners authorised under our Great Seal for causes ecclesiastical, have thought good to give them free leave to treat in Convocation; and agree upon certain other Canons necessary for the advancement of God's Glory, the edifying of His Holy Church, and the due reverence of His blessed Mysteries and Sacraments. . . .

The Convocation of 1640 was in modern phrase predominantly a High Church body, just as is the case with the Convocation of 1906, and for the same reason. Both assemblies met after a whole generation of remodelling in the High Church interest. Most part of the Bishops then as now were of that ecclesiastical colour; and then as now they appointed a great part of the Lower House. The Deans and Capitular Proctors had reached their places along the same high-road of royal favour, and for a quarter of a century the passport to preferment had been "Orthodoxy." In one point only is there a great difference in the two Convocations. The President of 1640 was Laud, the President of 1906 is the present Primate.

Whether that difference will make all the difference remains to be seen. Moreover, then, as now, that assembly of High Churchmen had to face a strong movement of popular resentment provoked by "Ritualism." It is, indeed, hard to believe that one is not reading of current events when one reads the record of the Puritan protests against the sacerdotalism of Laud and his satellites. There is the same blundering violence, the same enormous stupidity, the same exaggeration and unreason, on the side which yet, at bottom, one feels is in the right; the same superiority of statement, manner, and temper, the same triumphant appeal to rubrics and formularies, the same strong language against everything Popish, coupled with the same tenacious pursuit of anti-Protestant objects, on the side which one cannot but see is at bottom profoundly wrong. The multitude is ever swayed rather by its instincts than by its reason; it feels, rather than perceives, that it is being betrayed, and in these moods, though it is often monstrously mistaken with regard to individuals and episodes, yet in the main, it is almost always right. Thus, to give one famous instance, nothing could have been more violent and undiscriminating than the anti-Popery frenzy of Charles II.'s reign, and it is certain that much wrong was done to individuals, but at bottom the people were right. There was a Popish plot of the most serious character against their faith and freedom; they were only mistaken in not recognizing the real criminals, and of them all the worst, the worthless monarch himself.

In 1640 the instincts of the people were right,

though they acted with violent injustice to individuals, and were not at all competent to create institutions as substitutes for those which they designed to destroy. It is, I repeat, the sinister similarity of the conditions in 1640 and in 1906 which "leaps to the eyes" of the student as he follows the picturesque and self-conscious narrative of the "clerk for the Church of Westminster." The unpopularity of the Convocation was brought home to the members by the clamours of the crowd which hung about the Abbey, and these were only restrained from actual violence by a guard of the Trained Bands of Middlesex.

> To such extremities were the poor clergy brought during these confusions; in danger of the King's displeasure if they rose, of the people's fury if they sate; in danger of being beaten up by tumults, when they were at their work, of being beaten down by the following Parliament, when their work was done.[1]

It is worth while inquiring what were the decisions at which the assembled clergy arrived, in order to assuage the public discontent, and reconcile the nation to its Church. The Canons of 1640 remain on record as a classic example of the political ineptitude of clergymen; in this character they can only be matched by the social legislation of the Puritan Assemblies (which, though not clerical, were similarly dominated by dogmatic and denominational considerations), which replaced one another in quick succession in Westminster during the following twenty years. Political ineptitude does not concern us here; a more important matter is the evidence which the Canons offer as to the clerical conception of remedies

[1] *v. Life of Laud*, p. 403, London, 1671.

for the religious grievances of that difficult time. It is characteristic of preachers and teachers to attach extreme importance to official exhortations, and these Canons illustrate the professional self-importance of the Laudian hierarchy. They are hortatory in form, with the condescending explanations of the conventional sermon thrown in, as it were out of compassion for the limited intelligence and deplorable prejudices of the laity. It will suffice to set down the titles of these remarkable enactments, and to refer the curious reader to their full text in Sparrow's well-known collection of Anglican records:

1. Concerning the regal power (an amazing exposition of "Byzantine" autocracy).
2. For the better keeping of the day of his Majesty's most happy Inauguration.
3. For the suppressing of the growth of Popery.
4. Against Socinianism.
5. Against Sectaries.
6. An Oath enjoin'd for the preventing of all Innovations in Doctrine and Government. (This was the notorious "Etc. Oath").
7. A Declaration concerning some Rites and Ceremonies.
8. A Preaching for Conformity.
9. One Book of Articles of Enquiry to be used at all Parochial Visitations.
10. Concerning the Conversation of the Clergy. (This re-enacts the long Canons, 74 and 75, of 1604, dealing with clerical garments in and out of Church).
11—17. Dealing with the administration of the Ecclesiastical Laws in the Courts.

For such Canons to have any effect at all in calming the public mind it would be indispensable that they should have issued from men in whom the nation had complete confidence. As it was, they were not only

extremely distasteful in themselves for the most part, but also they were the work of men whom for very good reason the nation did not trust. It was not much use for the clergy to speak in the approved Protestant fashion of the time of "the Idolatry committed in the Mass, for which cause all Popish altars were demolished," since they immediately proceeded to explain why the holy tables were properly called "Altars" after all, and to urge "all good and well affected people, members of this Church, that they be ready to tender unto the Lord the said acknowledgment, by doing reverence and obeysance both at their coming in and going out of" the churches. It is exactly parallel to the present situation. Earnest episcopal repudiations of "Ritualism" fall flat on the ears of the public, and work no reconciliation, so long as the public observe the Bishops themselves to proceed in ever more amazing garments, and take part with apparently hearty sympathy in services which seem to indicate the clear and categorical contempt of their official counsels and censures. It would be all petty enough were it not for this most serious circumstance, that the dynamic of successful administration is the public confidence in the administrating officials, and this the Bishops themselves have destroyed.

Heylyn dwells with the complaisance of a principal actor in the events on the harmony of the debates, and the quick passage of the business:—

> It is a matter which deserves no small admiration, that these Canons (like the first building of the temple, without the noise of axe and hammer) should pass the house with

> such a general calm and quiet, and be received with so many storms and tempests when they went abroad. The very sitting of the Convocation condemned for an illegal act; as if it were a crime to have outlived the Parliament. And much sport made by ignorant and malicious men, touching the metamorphosis of an old convocation, into a new Synod, as they scoffed. . . . The whole body of the Canons voted by the House of Commons in the following Parliament, to be against the fundamental laws of the realm, against the King's prerogative, property of the subject, the right of Parliaments, and to tend to faction and sedition.[1]

Another historian of that hapless Convocation, and a far wiser man than the learned but vain and bigoted Heylyn, has left an account of the proceedings, and of the impression which they made. Fuller's account of the apprehensions which filled some minds at the very start of the session will find echoes in many Anglican minds to-day:—

> Some wise men in the Convocation began now to be jealous of the event of new Canons; yea, became fearful of their own selves, for having too great power, lest it should tempt them to be over-tampering in innovations. They thought it better that this Convocation, with its predecessors, should be censured for laziness, and the solemn doing of just nothing, rather than to run the hazard by over activity to do anything unjust. For, as waters long dammed up oft-times flounce, and fly out too violently, when their sluices are pulled up, and they let loose on a sudden; so the judicious feared, lest the Convocation, whose power of meddling with Church matters had been bridled up for many years before, should now, enabled with such power, over-act their parts, especially in such dangerous and discontented times. *Yea, they suspected lest those who formerly had outrun the Canons with their additional conformity (ceremonising more than was enjoined) now would make the Canons come up to them, making it necessary for others what voluntarily they had pre-practised themselves.*[2]

[1] *v. Ibid.*, p. 415.
[2] *v. Church History of Britain*, vol. II., p. 406. London, 1837.

Perhaps I have dwelt at too great length on an historical parallel which seems to me eminently worthy the consideration of English Churchmen, but I have preferred to point the moral of the present situation by means of a remarkably suggestive chapter of past history rather than to use a plainer language. It remains that I should return to the practical question whether the existing Convocation can be expected usefully to avail itself of the "Letters of Business" which have been officially issued.

IV. An Estimate of the Situation.

Convocation will meet in November without the indispensable condition of success. The history of the whole period since the Reformation demonstrates that *only when acting as a "Grand Committee" of the National Legislature, to carry out a well understood desire of the nation, is Convocation able to do effectual and enduring work.* In the reign of Elizabeth, and in that of Charles II., when the Prayer Book was shaped, and when it was restored, the action of Convocation answered to the evident demands of the nation. The facility with which the sacred Synod responded to the wishes of the Government in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was an element of strength, so long as the Government really was the executive of the national will. Whenever Convocation has ambitions of its own, which do not correspond with the national will, its action has been futile, and even disastrous. In 1603 there was clear indication that a rift was

developing between the clergy and the people, and the Canons issued in 1604 have never really commended themselves to the general approval of the nation. In 1640 the rift had widened into a gulf, which only a very strong and patient statesmanship, combined with great professional self-suppression, could have bridged. Convocation responded with traditional readiness to the lead of the Government, but unhappily the Government had ceased to be the executive of the national will, and to carry out the official policy was to bring all to destruction. At the Restoration the divergence of sentiment between clergy and people was forgotten in the delirium of conservative reaction, but a quarter of a century of Stuart government in Church and State sufficed to bring the latent quarrel to the surface again. The non-jurors were the heroes of the clergy, and personally counted among the saintliest Churchmen of the time, but their conception of the English Church did not correspond with that which the best intelligence of the time admitted. Their policy of Anglican isolation was offensive to the reason and the conscience of a generation which found itself compelled to realize the essential solidarity of the Protestant Churches. The English people, however averse to sectarian movements, which were bound up in its recent memory with social revolution and political crime, was passionately Protestant. The record of the Convocations, which stifled every effort for "comprehension," and exulted in precisely those exercises of traditional functions which approximated closest to ancient mediæval and contemporary Papist models,

is that of a continuous discord. There was much genuine zeal for religion among the members, but their passionate bigotry disqualified them apparently and beyond all doubt for their constitutional functions. Their proceedings have not made an appreciable impression on the history of England, and the long silence of 135 years, from 1717 to 1852, was probably no real injury to the National Church. The Tractarians, using to the full the personal influence which they could wield in the higher ranges of public life, secured the resumption of sessions for discussion and even for business. It is curious to read the immense expectations which were cherished by the advocates of Convocation. Such a publication as Robert Wilberforce's *Church Courts and Church Discipline* is melancholy reading now, almost as melancholy as the record of his more famous brother's state-craft. Why is it that the fifty-four years of renewed activity has left Convocation where it is in the public estimate? The Assembly has many claims to respect. It is filled with able, earnest, public-spirited men; it includes among its members a majority of well-educated, and a large minority of learned, men. Its debates are conducted with decorum, and not rarely illumined with eloquence. I have witnessed in the same session debates in Convocation and in the House of Commons, and in point of relevance, information, and power, I should not consider the clerical assembly to be in any respect inferior. Why is it that so respectable an assembly, representing beyond all question the best elements of the national hierarchy, counts for so little in the public regard, and labours without

securing even the homage of criticism and censure? The answer lies in the fact that the Convocation is out of harmony with the prevailing religious sentiment of the English people. We went to our work in 1906, as our official predecessors went to theirs in 1640, without the indispensable support of the national will. The nature of the present ecclesiastical crisis is too generally misunderstood. It is not merely, or principally, that the English people intend to suppress a few harmless ceremonies, which to those who practise them are of religious value. If those ceremonies ceased to-morrow I do not think the situation would be appreciably affected. *The core of the public grievance is that by the agency and under the patronage of the clergy a transformation is quietly being effected in the National Church.* Ideals are being proposed to the young which are not consistent with the traditional English notions of piety and of patriotism. Asceticism, with its contempt for the active life, and its exaltation of artificial and introspective habits, is being pressed on the clergy; and as the clergy accept an ascetic view of the religion they teach, they carry into their parishes a type of living which tends to isolate them from the common life of the people, and conform them to the familiar but discredited types of the past. Asceticism goes hand in hand with a materialistic sacramentalism, and throughout Christian history has been the strength of superstition. It is not denied that on ascetic principles Christianity can be presented in alluring forms, and that there is danger in the clear and stern refusal to admit the legitimacy of ascetic ideals, but it is maintained that

in the last analysis asceticism rests on a radical misconception of the Gospel, and involves a violation of human nature itself. Moreover, this ascetic Christianity, with its cult of celibacy and exaltation of self-submission to external direction, is inextricably bound up with the doctrines about the Church and the clergy, which have their free and logical expression in the Roman Church. The English people are convinced that a tendency Romewards is running strongly in the English Church at this moment, and they dread that tendency, not because they dislike a particular ceremony, or would wish to tie the Church for ever to the liturgical fashions or no-fashions of the past, but because they cannot help seeing the grave social and political difficulties which arise everywhere within the Roman sphere. They contrast the comparative amenity of English public life, the continuity and order of our politics, the deep, patriotic agreement and the harmony of ecclesiastical and civil authority which exist among our people, with the state of things which obtains elsewhere, say, in France, or Austria, or Italy. One fact stands up conspicuously to the view of the political student. The Church, which has hitherto in England been mainly an unifying influence, is within those countries a dividing influence. The coherence of society seems to depend upon our keeping clear of those conceptions of life, of duty, of Church and State, which have their most authoritative and impressive enunciation from the Vatican. At bottom the English people are convinced that the plain interest of society and the true claim of the Gospel must coincide: and they remain

still as confident in the rightness of the great spiritual revolution, which created the Reformed Church of England, as were their ancestors who carried it through. They suspect that this confidence is not shared by many of the clergy, and they know that it is openly ridiculed by some. Before the Romeward tendency shall have advanced beyond all possibility of control, they desire to come to an understanding with the hierarchy as to the future. Is the National Church still a Protestant Church in its fundamental principles or not? It cannot pretend to be the Church in the plenary, august, and exclusive sense in which the word is used when Christians profess their Creed. To oppose "Protestant" to "Catholic," as if the one term excluded the other, is a trivial trick of proselytising controversy, effectual with boys and maid-servants, but lying below the notice of serious men. Christianity is a larger thing than either Protestant or Papist imagines; but here and now the great division of mental attitude and moral judgment which severs the man who exalts the religion of the New Testament above the Church, and the man who only reads the New Testament through the Church, faces us. Do we judge ecclesiastical institutions by the ideas of the Gospel, or the ideas of the Gospel by the verdicts of ecclesiastical institutions? It is an ultimate divergence of religious conceptions. Of course it is not this to the most part of individual Christians. There are countless Papists who are really at bottom Protestants; and countless Protestants who are really at bottom Papists. I speak of the reality, not of the current descriptions. Protestant and Papist stand for

different views of the Gospel, for different standards of personal and public duty, for different tendencies. In this sense the English Church is Protestant and the Roman Church is Papist. To strengthen and discipline individuality is the proper consequence of the one system; to weaken and crush it is the normal effect of the other. Precisely at this juncture serious citizens have been forced to realize the vital importance of cherishing, assisting, and making the most of the individuality of the English folk, harder pressed than ever before by the competition of other equally civilized and not inferior nations. It is a grave question what direction is being given to English thought and character by the National Church. The controversies about education have compelled the raising and answering of that question. For the Church claims with passionate emphasis to be allowed as of right to have the fashioning of English children in the State schools, and in the ardour of her contention is ready to de-Christianize the whole national system rather than surrender her privileged status. It is obvious that the nation must receive some sufficient security that the Christianity taught by the clergy of the National Church is that which the nation believes in, and intends to preserve, not that which the nation rejected and desires to avoid. Is the Church of England in fundamental principle, and in actual working, a Protestant Church?

This is the question which underlies the comparatively trivial issue of the vestments. It seems inevitable that if letters of business are acted upon, and Convocation proceeds to treat of the subject of vest-

ments, attention should be fastened on the known opinions of the members. Take the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury. Of the twenty-seven bishops who form that House there is but one who could even plausibly be styled a Low Churchman, there may be as many as seven who, either by conviction or by temperament, may be fairly described as Broad Churchmen, the remaining nineteen are High Churchmen, varying in the measure and type of their sacerdotalism, but all in principle agreed. Take the Lower House. I should estimate that out of its 175 members, there may possibly be a score of Broad Churchmen, perhaps as many Low Churchmen, and the remaining 135 High Churchmen. Rough as these figures are, they are sufficient to indicate the discrepancy between the Convocational and the National points of view. What is wanted is a decisive proof that the Church of England remains in the true sense of the word a Church of the Reformation, a Protestant Church, with a wide outlook on to life, and a tradition of progressive self-adaptation to national conditions; and that proof the Convocation will not give. Let us suppose that the vestments are sanctioned, as presumably they will be, by the Convocations. The new "Ornaments Rubric" comes before Parliament in due course for enactment as a statute to replace the unfortunate rule which at present adorns the Prayer Book. Is it conceivable that any Parliament, whatever its political colour, will pass the new rubric? To my thinking, legislation of the kind indicated in the Report of the Royal Commission is inconceivable. "What harm will have been done in

that case?" it may be asked. The answer is not difficult. On the one hand, the representative institutions of Church and State will have been brought into open conflict. On the other hand, the lawless proceedings of the "Ritualists" will have received the great stimulus and encouragement of Convocational approval. The abortive canon, which sanctions the vestments, will at once strengthen the movement which vestments represent, and paralyze the arm of episcopal authority, if that arm should be raised in a serious effort of repression.

Assuredly the clergy would have been in a far better situation for facing the crisis of the "great Rebellion," if they had not been embarrassed and discredited by the proceedings in the Convocation of 1640. Not less certain does it appear to me that the clergy will be better able to steer a wise course through the troubled times that lie before us now, if they are not tied and bound by such decisions as the existing Convocations are likely to reach. Our strength as a Church is to sit still. *There are forces at work, which if but they be given time enough, will silently but surely correct the obscurantist tendencies which at the moment are dominant in the hierarchy.* At Oxford and Cambridge notably the theological teaching is passing steadily into the hands of men who are scholars of the modern type, and their disciples are teaching the candidates for Holy Orders in London, Durham, Lampeter, and even in the seminaries. It cannot but be that the effect of such teaching should make itself apparent in the pulpits and in the parishes. I believe the Tractarian Movement is a spent force,

and that every year as it passes weakens the dominance of sacerdotalist views among the clergy. If only the nation would be patient, the National Church will right itself. Moreover, I cannot believe that the Low Church Party is going to perish ignobly from sheer poverty of intellect and lack of energy. At present, indeed, that once great party is in a moribund condition, which, if the consequences of the Church and nation were not so serious, might well move to scorn. It is prostrate in the Universities; almost non-existent in the world of thought and literature; scarcely apparent in the councils of the Church. Its sole claim to consideration lies in its missionary activities, and in this respect it presents a curious parallel to the Roman Church. The intellectual penury of Evangelicalism is as deplorable as it is notorious. There are some bitter words in one of Mark Pattison's Essays, which appear to me not too severe to describe the present state of the Low Church party; he is explaining the success of the Tractarians, and this is what he says:—

> In 1833 Evangelism was already effete. The helpless imbecility of Evangelical writing and preaching; their obvious want of power to solve, or even to apprehend, the questions of which they are nevertheless perpetually talking; their incapacity to explain the Scripture, while assuming the exclusive right to it; their conceit at being able to arrive at conclusions without premisses; in a word their intellectual weakness contributed very greatly to the fall of the Evangelical school before a better informed generation of men.[1]

Yet, in spite of its present degradation, there is in Evangelicalism a power which, if but its leaders

[1] *v. Essays*, p. 269, vol. II. Oxford, 1889.

could make a holocaust of their paralyzing prejudices, might save the National Church. Let the Low Church Party find in the Reformation, not a series of petrifying traditions and rigid precedents, but the principle of intellectual progress and ecclesiastical adaptation. Let Evangelicalism do sincerely, what Sacerdotalists can only do with risk and embarrassment, receive with a willing mind the new learning of the modern epoch, and reconcile a Protestant nation to a reformed and ever-reforming Church.

But for the resurrection of the Low Church Party, as for the decay of sacerdotalism, we want time, not "Letters of Business."

XVIII

CONVOCATION AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

ON June 21, 1906, the Royal Commissioners signed their Report on Ecclesiastical Discipline, which was in due course "presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of his Majesty," and it soon appeared that action on the basis of that Report was in contemplation. In November "Letters of Business" were issued to the Convocations, and these were forthwith taken into consideration by those assemblies. In February, 1907, Committees of all the Houses were appointed "to consider the nature of the reply to be made to the Letter of Business received from his Most Gracious Majesty," and those Committees are now at work. In the interval between the appointment of the Royal Commission (April 23, 1904) and the issue of its Report (June 21, 1906) there had been a general election in the country, resulting in a dramatic change of the political situation. The new House of Commons contained, as the Nonconformist journals exultingly announced

with perhaps an inadequate perception of the risk of political parallels, a greater number of Nonconformists than any House since that fatuous and fanatical assembly collected by Oliver Cromwell, and known ridiculously in history as "Barebone's Parliament." All the circumstances of the time tended to emphasize the elements which might fairly be described as unfriendly to the National Church;- and it was very generally expected that the Government would so far yield to the feeling of their supporters as to refuse to facilitate the action of the Convocations. Had this course been adopted, with whatever motives, it is certain that many, perhaps most, serious English Churchmen would have felt a sense of relief, for if the risks of doing nothing are great, it is easy to see that the risks of doing anything effectual are probably greater, and there is no confidence anywhere in the competence of the ecclesiastical assemblies to take any action likely to strengthen the Church in the regard of the nation. The Government, however, proved equally superior to the resentment of Nonconformists and to the apprehensions of Churchmen, and advised the King to authorize action by the Convocations according to the recommendation of the Report. The form of the Letter of Business and its exact relation to the recommendation of the Report are worth noting. The salient passages are here shown side by side:—

REPORT	LETTER OF BUSINESS
Letters of Business should be issued to the Convocations with instructions (*a*) to con-	We authorize you . . . to debate, consider, consult, and agree upon the following

sider the preparation of a new rubric regulating the ornaments (that is to say, the vesture) of the ministers of the Church, at the times of their ministrations, *with a view to its enactment by Parliament*, and (*b*) to frame, *with a view to their enactment by Parliament*, such modifications in the existing law relating to the conduct of Divine Service and to the ornaments and fitting of churches *as may tend to secure the greater elasticity* which *a reasonable recognition of the comprehensiveness of the Church of England and of its present needs seems to demand.*

It would be most desirable for the early dealing with these important subjects that the Convocations should sit together, and we assume that they would take counsel with the Houses of Laymen.

points, matters, and things contained in the recommendations of the said Report, *videlicet the desirability* and the form and contents of a new Rubric regulating the ornaments (that is to say, the vesture) of the ministers of the Church at the times of their ministrations, and also of any modifications of the existing law relating to the conduct of Divine Service and to the ornaments and fittings of churches; and, after mature debate, consideration, consultation, and agreement that you do present to us a Report or Reports thereon in writing.

It will be observed that the Letter of Business introduces the very important subject of "desirability," and omits all reference to "enactment by Parliament" and "the Houses of Laymen." It also ignores the suggestion as to the object of whatever modifications may be made, viz., to secure greater elasticity in the interest of comprehensiveness. The Houses of Laymen, indeed, being unknown to the Law or to the Constitution of this country, could not well have been introduced into a legal document, and perhaps ought not to have been introduced by the Commissioners into their Report.

If it be asked what ought to be understood by phrase "modification of the existing law relating the conduct of Divine Service and to the orname and fittings of churches," it must be answered t the Commissioners have set forth their opinions the point clearly enough in the Report. They s that in their opinion 'the law relating to the cond of Divine Service and the ornaments of churches nowhere exactly observed;' they specify at leng and distinguish according to the gravity of th significance, a large number of illegal practices a omissions; and they indicate as the moral of eve thing that, until the law is made elastic enough authorize a host of harmless and edifying variatic of the rubrical system, there is no possibility of a effectual handling of that really serious law-breaki which proceeds on principles inconsistent with loya to the Church of England, and consciously aims creating a state of belief and of religious pract which are distinctively and perniciously Roman. enforce the law anywhere it must be enforced enforceable everywhere; as long as breaches of t law must be tolerated somewhere, the power to enfo the law remains adequate nowhere. That in sentence is the conclusion of the Royal Comm sioners. The changes, therefore, which the Convoc tion Committees are now considering must be ve extensive indeed, covering all the ground of illegali and that, as the Report says, is co-extensive with t whole area of ecclesiastical administration. It w said by the Dean of Canterbury in the Lower Hou of the Canterbury Convocation that this amounted

"throwing the Prayer Book into the melting-pot," and the expression is not excessive. The extreme gravity of such an undertaking will only be appreciated by those who remember what the Prayer Book has meant to the English Church. Half a century ago Lord Aberdeen described the Church of England as "two churches only held together by external forces"; and he was not wholly mistaken. Of the forces which have held these bodies together unquestionably the most powerful, because the least observed, has been the Prayer Book which both have professed to understand rightly and to obey. It would, of course, be possible, perhaps it is probable, that the Convocational Committees may shrink before so great a task, and content themselves with making some strictly limited recommendation, designed to deal with the particular points most immediately pressing. Some amendment of the unhappy 'Ornaments Rubric,' which may purchase a termination of hostilities with the 'Ritualists' by conceding what is supposed to be the most ardently desired of their objects—special vestments at the Holy Communion —is said in some quarters to form the whole extent of the proposals which will be made. Ecclesiastical assemblies are always conservative and timid. Even courageous men might draw back in dismay before the risks of the duty now laid on the Convocations; but one thing is absolutely certain. Some petty recommendation of a new Rubric designed to authorize 'Ritualism' in one, and that by no means the most important, of its expressions would have no other effect than to increase the existing confusion,

extend the spirit of disorder, multiply illegalities on all sides, and hasten the inevitable crisis of disestablishment drawing in its train disruption. The 'two churches' will go adrift unless the Prayer Book can be restored by large and balanced revision to that position of general acceptance, which it has held since the Reformation, but is now, for very evident reasons, ceasing to hold. In proportion to the understanding of the full gravity of the situation will be the interest felt in the Convocations which are called to handle it. What is their constitution? What has been their history? What is their present position in the public regard and confidence? What reason is there for thinking that they will if they can, or can if they will, fulfil the solemn and difficult task which has been entrusted to them?

It may be observed that there is something ominous about the mere fact of Convocational action, for in the experience of the Reformed Church the activity of the Convocations has always indicated an acute phase of clerical self-assertion, and precipitated some sharp conflict between the Church and the nation. Nowhere else, perhaps, is the divergence between the layman's point of view and that of the ordinary clergyman so sharply distinguished as in the estimate of Convocation. The opening paragraphs of Prebendary Joyce's well-known 'Handbook of the Convocations (1887)' will serve to show this sufficiently.

> 'The lack of public interest generally taken in the Convocations or Provincial Synods of the Church of England has been for many years past out of all proportion with the venerable character of those assemblies, their

constitutional importance, the rich legacies they have bequeathed to us, and the grave authority in matters of the highest moment which at this hour resides in them. Certainly, that any adequate interest in the subject has been of late limited to comparatively few persons is undeniably a matter of fact. The contents of the daily press may be taken as a tolerably sure index of the public mind; and in those columns have been frequently found minutely detailed reports of the meetings of railway directors, or of the liquidation of a bankrupt mining company, while a contemporaneous Session of Convocation has been either dismissed in a scanty notice, or, indeed, altogether ignored.

"This disregard of the Church's Synods is wellnigh unaccountable in a Christian country, when it is considered that they are institutions founded on an Apostolical model, intimately associated with the earliest records of the Church's life as now developed in this land, and further that they have aforetime secured for us blessings of inestimable value which we now enjoy."

Elsewhere the good Prebendary aspires to show that the Convocations 'are founded on the footstone of a Divine commission, framed on an Apostolical model, and constituted on principles adopted by the primitive Church.'

This exaggerated theory is not, as might be readily supposed, the eccentricity of an enthusiastic clergyman, but the formal doctrine of the Church of England, defined by the Convocation itself in the Canons of 1604, and carefully guarded by *ipso facto* excommunications on all who depart from it. A very curious note by Dr. Cardwell in the Preface to his 'Synodalia' is worth quoting, as illustrating the perplexity which this exalted theory now causes to those who hold it.

"Let it be granted, whether on the ground of unbroken descent, or on the more general plea of church unity, that a convocation of the Church of England, constituted as it

has always been, is entitled to claim succession from the Council of Jerusalem ; and some estimate may be formed of the extent to which modern decrees are binding upon present churchmen. Deduct from the case of the Apostles their individual and joint infallibility, and together with it that independence and freedom which a church united with the State has necessarily surrendered, and the difference is the condition of a modern English Synod, capable of being misled, as consisting of men who can give no proof that they are divinely inspired, limited even by its original constitution, because it cannot decree in opposition to the words of Christ and His apostles, and still further limited by its alliance with the State, because no man can serve two masters. After these important abatements, however, there is still some degree of obligation remaining ; and whatever that may be, and however impossible it may be to convey it in any prescribed rule of conduct, it represents the real extent to which the canons of 1604 are still binding upon the lay members of the Church. That this extent is to be determined by each individual for himself contracting a responsibility which, from the nature of the question, the Church cannot exercise for him, is a fact which only adds to the amount of his duties, and to the care and seriousness he must use in endeavouring to discharge them."

"Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." The ordinary layman hardly takes the canons of 1604 so seriously, and indeed, for the most part, is serenely unconscious of their existence. It is almost pathetic to find Dr. Cardwell himself driven by his review of the history of Convocation to grant "that synods from their constitution are ill suited to the actual condition of the Church, and from past experience of their conduct have been condemned to a perpetual silence." Within a few years, however, from the time of writing these words, the Tractarians succeeded in reviving the Convocations, which for more than a century had been virtually reduced to silence. Half

a century of fresh experience has not materially affected the estimate of the value of these assemblies, and, as we have seen, their most ardent advocates can only lament the humiliating disregard with which they are treated by the press and the public. What is the reason of this settled indifference? Does it lie in the constitution of Convocation, or is it the consequence of its action? Partly, perhaps, both constitution and action are in fault, but the main responsibility for the admitted failure of Convocation rests on neither, but lies deep in the very circumstances of English life and the novel conditions of religious action.

The Convocations are purely clerical assemblies, and they have survived their original functions. It is probably a matter for regret that when, after the Restoration, the ecclesiastical settlement had been effected by the joint action of Parliament and Convocation, and the ancient right of taxing the clergy had been surrendered by the latter, on the understanding that henceforward clergymen should possess the parliamentary franchise, the existence of the Convocations had not been terminated. Their importance, and most part of their influence, expired with their control of the clerical purse. The work they did in preparing the Prayer Book for Parlimentary enactment was done once for all, and nothing that they have since done required for the doing such cumbrous and at the same time pretentious machinery. Probably the only performance by the resuscitated Convocation which has arrested public notice, or received any considerable public approbation, has been the revising of the Authorized Version of the Bible, and it must be

apparent to everyone that that work could have been as well, perhaps better, carried through by a Royal Commission or by the Universities. Whatever value the debates may have in publicly ventilating matters of interest appears to be insufficient to justify the existence of the Convocations, for in point of fact they have been displaced in the general regard of the Church by the more numerous, representative, and unshackled assemblies known as Diocesan Conferences and Church Congresses. An exalted formal theory of spiritual right can hardly atone for the practical defects of the Convocations, especially in view of the the fact that that theory has never been at any time more than a pious opinion held by some, rejected by most, English Churchmen. Dr. Cardwell's language is even more relevant to the situation in 1907 than it was in 1842 :

> "It is declared in the canons of King James that a synod so constituted (as the Convocations) is the true Church of England by representation, and by this dictum is meant, not that a synod is a selection made equally and by themselves from the clergy at large, much less a selection of any kind from the whole body of the faithful, but merely that it is invested with the real character and power of the Church. It is, however, to the former meaning of the word representation that the spirit of modern times has uniformly tended, and the tendency has been promoted and established by the changes that have been made in the constitution of the State. The incongruity, moreover, which has followed in the construction of a synod has been increased in a multiplied progression from the greater prominence and the augmented numbers that have been acquired by the parochial clergy, and the diminished and depressed condition of the chapters. Under such circumstances and with the current of public opinion borne so strongly in the opposite direction, it may reasonably be asked whether a synod so constituted could wisely be

> employed to accomplish any work of difficulty, obtaining no respect or sympathy from churchmen in general, and regarded with suspicion or jealousy by the clergy themselves."[1]

The constitution of the Convocations is certainly, from a democratic point of view sufficiently defective. Take the case of the Lower House of Canterbury. Of the 175 members no less than ninety-six are official, and of the remainder twenty-five sit as representatives of the Chapters, which perhaps number about 150 electors. The rest of the clergy, numbering about 15,000 in round numbers, are represented by only fifty-four proctors. The case of London is often quoted. Here are two chapters, that of St. Paul's Cathedral, and that of the independent Collegiate Church of Westminster. These chapters number in all eleven persons, and they are represented in the Convocation by two deans, one archdeacon, and two proctors. The diocesan clergy, beneficed and unbeneficed, are estimated to number over 1,400, and they are represented by two proctors. On democratic principles this is of course patently absurd. Why should the eleven capitular clergy count for more than twice as much in the counsels of the Church as their 1,400 parochial brethren? The question admits of but one answer. On democratic principles such inequality is indefensible. It may, however, be fairly maintained that democratic principles are hardly the right principles to apply to the assemblies of the Christian Church. A hierarchy violates those principles; the distinction of clergy and laity violates them; the

[1] Synodalia, vol. I., p. xxiv.

incidents of the national establishment, such for example as the system of patronage, and the presence of the Archbishops and Bishops in the House of Lords, violate them grievously. Why should principles be applied to the constitution of the Convocations which have admittedly no application in the other parts of our ecclesiastical system? A Church which is both Episcopal and established cannot safely admit democratic principles into its synods. Apart from the specifically *democratic* objection, which, however, has a curious fascination for the unbeneficed clergy of the sacerdotal school, who are for the nonce much affected by socialistic sentiment, it does not appear that any valid case can be made out against the representative character of the Convocations. All the distinctive elements of our ecclesiastical system are exhibited in the Houses as at present constituted—the officials, the parochial clergy, the chapters, the scholars and writers. If any criticism might seem relevant to the present constitution, it would be that the authority of the Episcopal Bench is excessive. The Bishops nominate all the Archdeacons and many of the Canons; it is probably the case that more than half the Lower House of the Canterbury Convocation is directly or indirectly elected by the Episcopate. This is a serious fault in an assembly which is specially charged with the wardship of those independent interests of which the Episcopate would seem, on a review of Christian experience, to be the natural opponents. The unfortunate modern fashion, inaugurated by Archbishop Benson, of Episcopal action by common agreement of the Bishops has greatly added to the risks of this

opposition, since the salutary inter-play of episcopal individuality has been checked and made almost inoperative. When all is said, however, it can hardly be successfully argued that the existing Convocations do not reflect with fair accuracy the best mind of the clergy, and no reformation of the modes of election would really alter in any serious degree the character of the Houses. It is far more probable that any changes that would be made would tend to emphasize what cannot but be regarded as the principal defect of the present Convocations, their partizan character. No one who has any knowledge of the English clergy will deny that, as matters now stand, the most active and best educated of the incumbents, and the most effective and influential of the Bishops and dignified clergy, are fairly to be described as High Churchmen. It probably is the case that the majority of the clergy are of another description, but very many of them are, speaking broadly, and allowing for some notable exceptions, men of inferior ability and undistinguished position. Thus it necessarily follows that the Convocations which, as we have seen, represent the best elements of the clergy, are predominantly "High Church" assemblies. They express the mind of only one of Lord Aberdeen's "two Churches." Unfortunately, the most part of the Anglican laity belong to the other Church, and their views are only expressed by a handful of Evangelicals and Latitudinarians in Convocation, which listens to them with imperturbable courtesy, and votes them down with unwavering decision. This is the core of the practical difficulty, and no tampering with the constitution of the Convocations will be able to remove

it. The fact that the Convocations are purely clerical assemblies is only disadvantageous to their legitimate influence because of the deep divergence of religious principle which parts clergy and laity in the Church of England. Roughly, it is true to say that of the "two Churches" which form the Church of England, one is the Church of the Clergy, and the other is the Church of the Laity.

The same circumstance invalidates the parallel often suggested between the Established Church of Scotland and that of England. High Churchmen are fond of quoting Dr. Johnson's demand, why the Church of England should not, equally with the Church of Scotland, have its instrument of self-government, a Convocation in the one case, a General Assembly in the other; but they forget that the good Doctor's words were spoken precisely at a time when, for good or, as most people might think, for evil, there was agreement between the clergy and the laity of the English Church. In the latter half of the eighteenth century the harmony of the Establishment was unbroken either by ecclesiastical self-assertion or by enthusiastic eccentricity. The one factor of disturbance had gone forth with the Non-jurors, and died in isolation; the other had not yet broken into the pale, and went its course outside as in all but name a dissenting movement. Neither Dr. Johnson nor any of his contemporaries could have imagined such a situation of inner dissidence as that to which the Church of England has been brought by the appearance and, within the ranks of the clergy, the triumph of Tractarian principles. The Non-jurors

have returned and prevailed. A second expulsion would involve the destruction of the Church itself. In Scotland there is, and since the final establishment of the Presbyterian polity after the Restoration there always has been, complete agreement in principle between the clergy and the laity of the national Church. Divisions of opinion are of course common enough, but they never take the form of clerical as against lay opinion, but affect both clergy and laity in the same way. North of the Tweed there is nothing at all answering to what we are accustomed to hear described, not unfairly, as "sacerdotalism," nor is there any difference in the point of view from which clergymen and laymen respectively debate religious and ecclesiastical questions. Reference to the annals of the English Church will make it clear that the satisfactory and permanent work of Convocation has only been accomplished at those points in the national history when there was a general harmony of feeling and purpose between clergy and laity. When Parliament and Convocation were at agreement, there was no disposition in the lay assembly to hinder or belittle the action of the clerical; on the contrary there was a recognition of the convenience and the propriety of co-operation between the assemblies, ecclesiastical business being prepared by the one and finally determined by the other. It is not, then, the case, as has sometimes been suggested, that the incompetence of Convocation at the present time arises from the circumstance that Convocation is exclusively clerical, but rather from the fact that a change has passed over the clergy, which has not passed over the laity.

The one have become distinctively "Catholic," the other remain immovably "Protestant." This grand divergence of sentiment and objective paralyzes the action both of Parliament and of Convocation. Whatever legislation is passed with respect to the working of the National Church depends for its successful working on the goodwill of the clergy, who are, and always must be, the ordinary executive of the ecclesiastical laws. That goodwill, however, can now never be assumed, and its absence is more common than not in the case of almost all conceivable legislation. The clergy are morbidly jealous of any action which may impinge upon the extra-legal authority which they recognize in the Episcopate; the laity dare not use the Episcopate for the purposes which it evidently is competent to fulfil, because they will not run the risk of indirectly sanctioning that very doctrine of inherent rights which they justly regard as the *fons et origo malorum* in the religious sphere. Thus there is latent on both sides an element fatal to frank discussion and to efficient action. Nothing is really considered on its merits, but everything is seen in connection with hopes and fears which can hardly be acknowledged on either side. All these difficulties and embarrassments are at their greatest when the revision of the Prayer-book is contemplated, for the Prayer-book is at once manifestly the peculiar concern of the clergy, and the most important of all the securities against clerical usurpation with which the Reformation provided the laity. Professor Allen has not stated too strongly the significance of the Prayer Book from this point of view.

"The Church of England is pre-eminently a layman's Church, more so than any other Church in Christendom. If bishops and clergy were emancipated and set free from what had become the bondage of Rome, still greater was the emancipation secured to the laity. In the ancient Church and in the mediæval they had no part in the government of the Church or in the determination of its formularies. It was a common mode of speech to designate the clergy as *spirituales* and the laity as *carnales*. All this was changed at the Reformation. It was the laity who took the first steps towards separating the English Church from the authority of Rome, and who finally completed the process. It was by the laity that the Prayer Book was approved and its use made binding. The prominence of the laity in all the changes wrought at the Reformation gives a distinctive character to the Anglican Church as compared with the other reformed Churches. But in no respect was the revolution made so manifest as in the one supreme act by which the Book of Common Prayer was put into the hands of the people, as the laymen's book no less than that of the clergy. Hitherto such a thing was unknown. Primers were sometimes issued for the instruction of the laity, but at the Reformation all the offices of the Church, rendered into English, were placed in their hands. What had hitherto been the priests' book was henceforth to be the possession of all, men, women, and children alike. In the unreformed offices, the clergy responded to the clergy, and to say 'Amen' was the only participation of the people. In the Prayer Book the people respond to the clergy on equal terms. The clergy appear acting as the people's representative.

"There is a profound spiritual principle involved in this far-reaching change. It is sometimes said by those who are ignorant of the Anglican Church that in the Reformation she put forth no distinctive doctrine. . . . But a great act characterizes the Anglican Church—the making of a book whose possession by the people becomes a means of education, of enlightenment, and of Christian nurture. And beneath this act lies a doctrine of truth, which involves what is essential in the teaching of Christ—*the priesthood of all Christians*, who now offer spiritual sacrifices to God, of themselves, and not through another. In the light of this truth the agency of the clergy is subordinate. In the mutual response of people and clergy lies the visible and outward sign of Anglican worship, as contrasted with Greek

> or Roman or Puritan worship, where the isolated officiant at the altar or in the pulpit alone is speaking and the people are silent."[1]

We make no apology for the length of this quotation, for it sets out with admirable clearness the main point of our present argument. It is not unusual to hear men say with a contemptuous tone, as if, indeed, the words implied a bitter satire on such a version of Christ's religion, that "the Prayer Book is a schedule of an Act of Parliament." There is nothing invidious or unworthy in the fact. It rather carries the witness of the fundamental principle of Anglicanism. Parliament is no contemptible or incongruous source for the system of national Christianity. Given the Christianity which is *ex hypothesi* non-national, and given the independence of external authorities which is involved in the national character of the Church, there can be no more august exponent of Christ's religion than Parliament. No lesser authority would suffice for the purpose of establishing any system as legally binding on the entire community; no more venerable authority is in existence. There is good sense as well as sound constitutional doctrine in Hooker's language:

> "The most natural and religious course in making laws is, that the matter of them be taken from the judgment of the wisest in those things which they are to concern. In matters of God, to set down a form of public prayer, a solemn confession of the articles of Christian faith, rites and ceremonies meet for the exercise of religion, it were unnatural not to think the pastors and bishops of our souls a great deal more fit, than men of secular trades and callings;

[1] *Freedom in the Church*, p. 23.

> howbeit when all which the wisdom of all sorts can do is done for devising of laws in the Church, it is the general consent of all that giveth them the form and vigour of laws, without which they could be no more unto us than the counsels of physicians to the sick: well might they seem as wholesome admonitions and instructions, but laws could they never be without consent of the whole Church, which is the only thing that bindeth each member of the Church, to be guided by them. . . . Wherefore to define and determine even of the Church's affairs by way of assent and approbation, as laws are defined of in that right of power, which doth give them the force of laws; thus to define of our own church's regiment, the parliament of England hath competent authority." [1]

It is often said that the individual incumbent in the Church of England possesses autocratic powers; but it is not sufficiently remembered that this is the result of the paralysis of Parliamentary action, and neither any part of the original intention of the Reformers, nor any proper effect of the principles of the Anglican Reformation. The Prayer Book was designed to be the Directory of Public Worship. Its Rubrics were meant to cover all the cases in which authority could reasonably be invoked for the control or guidance of incumbents. In giving statutory sanction to the Prayer Book, Parliament may well have seemed to secure in perpetuity the supremacy of the lay mind in the administration of the Church. There is no need to relate in detail the events which have rendered the law partially inoperative; but it is important to remember that the effect of those events, in creating an autocracy of the incumbent, has no connection with any principle of the English Church. Convocation, however, cannot escape from the

[1] *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book VIII., ch. vi., p. 11.

conditions implicit in the very notion of a national Church, because the arrangements made at the Reformation have become in some particulars impracticable. To touch the Prayer Book is to handle a statute of the realm, and such handling would be both an impertinence and a futility unless it were carried out in the spirit of Hooker's constitutional doctrine. Convocation, as representing the clergy, who in this connection are 'the wisest,' or expert, members of the nation, is to prepare the proposals which in due course must be submitted to Parliament. That is the extent of their power: the effectual result of their labours depends absolutely on the measure of their agreement in principle with the laity represented in Parliament, and their ability to give suitable expression to that agreement. Twice since the Restoration settlement had been effected the Convocations have been invited to address themselves to the task of revising the Prayer Book. The history of Convocational action on those occasions does not encourage us to form very exalted expectations of the result of the efforts which are now being made in response to the Letters of Business.

It might have been supposed that no more favourable opportunity for a revision of the Prayer Book could have been provided than that which was brought to the Church by the Revolution. The old conception of a National Church, which had received supreme exposition in the pages of Hooker, yet held sway over the minds of English people, and the bitter feeling which had been stirred in men's minds by the persecutions of Dissenters under Charles II. and his

brother had almost disappeared under the influence of the extreme danger to the common Protestantism of Churchmen and Nonconformists, from which William's accession to the throne delivered the nation. In his original declaration the Prince of Orange had promised "to endeavour a good agreement between the Church of England and Protestant Dissenters," and there were not lacking men on both sides who would hold him to his promise. It is not without significance that the summoning of the Convocations was ordered by the King in response to the Address from both Houses of Parliament in which he was prayed that "according to ancient practice and usage of the kingdom, his Majesty would be graciously pleased to issue forth his writs, as soon as conveniently might be, for calling a Convocation of the clergy to be advised with in ecclesiastical matters." In September, 1689, a commission was issued to ten bishops and twenty divines to prepare business for the Convocations. The language of the Royal Commission in 1689 expresses very fairly the requirements of the situation in 1907. It is printed by Dr. Cardwell and runs thus:

> "Whereas the particular forms of divine worship, and the rites and ceremonies appointed to be used therein, are things in their own nature indifferent and alterable, and so acknowledged; it is but reasonable, that upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various exigencies of times and occasions, such changes and alterations should be made therein, as to those that are in place and authority should from time to time seem either necessary or expedient.
>
> "And whereas there are defects and abuses in the ecclesiastical courts and jurisdictions, and particularly there is not sufficient provision made for the removing of

scandalous ministers, and for the reforming of manners either in ministers or people; and whereas it is most fit that there should be a strict method prescribed for the examination of such persons, as desire to be admitted into holy orders, both as to their learning and manners.

"We therefore, out of our pious and princely care for the good order and edification and unity of the Church of England, committed to our charge and care, and for the reconciling, as much as possible, of all differences among our good subjects, and to take away all occasions of the like for the future, have thought fit to authorize and empower you, etc., and any nine of you, whereof three to be bishops, to meet from time to time as often as shall be needful, and to prepare such alterations of the liturgy and canons, and such proposals for the reformation of the ecclesiastical courts, and to consider of such other matters. as in your judgments may most conduce to the ends above mentioned."[1]

The Commissioners, thus authorized, set to work, and in due course agreed upon no fewer than five hundred and ninety-eight alterations to the book of Common Prayer. Calamy is said to have expressed his opinion that, if those alterations had been effected, two-thirds of the Nonconformists would have been reconciled with the National Church. The proposals of William's Commissioners were included in a Blue-book, printed by order of the House of Commons. Nothing came of them, for as soon as Convocation met, the fair dream of comprehension was scattered to the winds by a sudden and virulent demonstration of ecclesiastical prejudice on the part of the Lower House of Canterbury. The discussion of the Commissioners' proposals was never reached at all, for the temper of the clergy had been sufficiently indicated by a long wrangle over the phrasing of the Address to

[1] *Synodalia*, p. 694.

the King. Mr. Lathbury tells the melancholy story from the point of view of an ardent Tractarian, but even so its essential character is but too manifest. The Bishops had agreed to thank the King for his zeal for "the Protestant religion in general and the Church of England in particular," but the clergy had, like their successors of to-day, learned to dislike the famous name in which their fathers had gloried, and there was a hot disputation over the word "Protestant."

> "The words 'Protestant religion' were objected to; but the bishops contended for the expression; first, because it was the known designation of the common doctrine of the western part of Christendom, in opposition to the corruptions of the Romish Church; secondly, because the omission would be liable to strange constructions; thirdly, because it agrees with the general reasons offered for amendments by the clergy. The lower house resolved to substitute 'Protestant Churches' for 'Protestant religion'; and when the bishops demanded a reason, they answered, 'we being the representatives of a formed Established Church, do not think fit to mention the word "religion" any further than it is the religion of some "formed Established Church." . . .
>
> "The amendments were returned by the bishops with this alteration, 'We doubt not the interest of the Protestant religion in this and all other Protestant Churches.' The lower house requested the omission of the words 'this' and 'and,' lest the Church of England should suffer diminution in being joined with 'foreign Protestant Churches.' These words, with the passage relative to the 'deliverance from popish tyranny,' were at last omitted. In short, the address, in its amended form, was quite different from that which was originally framed by the bishops. There was no allusion in the amended address to his majesty's zeal for the Protestant religion, nor was there any expression of thanks for his majesty's commission."[1]

[1] *History of Convocation*, p. 300*f*.

We may observe in passing, that the clergy of the Lower House in 1689 were not well advised in their preference for the term "Protestant Church" rather than "Protestant religion." Bishop Stubbs, whose authority in questions of this kind may be regarded as final, was of another opinion. In his fourth Visitation Charge he expressed himself on the point:

> "'The Protestant religion' is, I think, the historical and reasonable expression for collective application. I do not like the term 'the Protestant Church' or 'the Protestant faith.' If the words mean any real thing, they must mean the Catholic Church or the Catholic Faith, set free from Roman subjection and what that subjection implies; the Catholic Church system and the Catholic faith, in various combinations, with various limitations and various sad variations in doctrine and discipline, organic imperfections even, which the grace of Him who is the Head of the Body will set right in His good time."[1]

The English people would have been greatly astonished if, on the morrow of the "glorious Revolution," they had been officially informed that they were not Protestants. Indeed, the sentiments of the nation were faithfully expressed by the introduction into the Coronation Oath at this time of the word "Protestant," and the strength of those sentiments was sufficiently demonstrated by the long and costly wars in the Protestant interest which, under the leadership of the Royal Deliverer, the country now embarked upon. The English Church had travelled far since the days when its bishops could with general consent be commissioned by the monarch to take part in the Calvinistic Synod of Dort (A.D. 1618). In the interval the movement of opinion associated

[1] *Visitation Charges*, p. 343.

with the name of Archbishop Laud had captured the English clergy; and although the secession of the Non-jurors, and the triumph of Latitudinarianism, which quickly followed the eviction of the Stuart dynasty, restored agreement between clergy and laity, yet the tradition of sacerdotalism smouldered through a long depression, and flamed out irresistibly in the nineteenth century.

The failure of William's policy of comprehension destroyed for ever the ecclesiastical unity of England. In the Toleration Act the failure of Laudianism to secure the acceptance of the English people was registered, and the denominationalising of the National Church was begun.

After an interval of nearly two centuries the Convocations were again invited to revise the Prayer-book. The Queen's Letter of Business authorized the clergy in Convocation to "debate, consider, consult, and agree upon the point, matters, and things contained in the Fourth and Final Report" of the Ritual Commission. This document was issued in 1872, and again in 1874. Under such authority the Convocation set to work, and after an interval of seven years, in 1879, presented their Reports to the Sovereign. Mr. John Murray has performed a useful public service in reissuing the recommendations of the Convocations shown conveniently by means of an interleaved edition of the Prayer Book. We have gone carefully through the suggested alterations, and fail to find in them the suggestion of any adequate consciousness of the real needs of the Church. Take the crucial case of the Ornaments Rubric. Every-

one knows that this unfortunate rule has been the occasion of most of the eccentricities in ceremonial which have created so much discontent in the public mind, and brought such dangerous unpopularity on the National Church since the disciples of the Tractarians discovered its possibilities. It would seem indispensable that ambiguity should be removed, and that the practice which was universal in the Reformed Church for three hundred years should be secured against any risk of disturbance by the antiquarian or sacerdotal innovations of an individual incumbent. The Convocation of Canterbury recommended the following addition to the Rubric:

> "until further Order be taken by lawful authority.
>
> "In saying Public Prayers and ministering the sacraments and other rites of the Church, every Priest and Deacon shall wear a surplice with a stole or scarf, and the hood of his degree, and in preaching he shall wear a surplice with a stole or scarf, and the hood of his degree, or, if he think fit, a gown with hood and scarf; and no other ornament shall at any time of his ministrations be used by him contrary to the monition of the Bishop of the Diocese.
>
> "Provided always that this Rubric shall not be understood to repeal the twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth, and fifty-eighth of the Canons of 1604."

What would be the effect of this new Rubric where the bishop, as is probably the case with the most part of their lordships, both desires the vestments for their own sake, and has persuaded himself that the original Ornaments Rubric ordered their use? Is it likely that "monitions" would be issued by such a bishop? And in the event of no monition being issued, what change for the better has been effected? No small number of thoughtful citizens, including men who are by temperament and tradition the most tolerant of Christians, are gravely disquieted by the rapid spread

of doctrines and practices which they hold to be morally and intellectually debilitating, and which they believe were precisely the doctrines and practices which at the Reformation the National Church disallowed and discarded. These are directly connected with the conceptions of the Holy Communion, and of the Ministry, avowedly symbolized by the "vestments." What consolation or reassurance is given to such men by the provision that the bishop of the diocese shall in the future be armed with a power to prohibit the introduction of the obnoxious "ornament"? The bishops in 1907 are not even as the bishops in 1879. Their lordships have discovered in the interval a very exalted notion of the powers latent in their office. Some, like the Bishop of Southwark, are known to have exercised a *jus liturgicum*, which actually overrides the statutes of the realm. Others, like the Bishop of Birmingham, have publicly declared their personal adhesion to the 'Ritualist' contentions. Others again, like the Bishop of London, have acquiesced in compacts with their own clergy, the effect of which has been to sanction some illegal practices on condition (rarely as a matter of fact fulfilled) that others are dispensed with. These bishops hardly had any counterpart a generation ago; and the situation has been very seriously affected by their appearance. In plain terms it is no longer reasonably possible to propose the Episcopate as a trustworthy barrier against the kind of law-breaking which has brought the National Church to the present crisis. This grave fact is not affected by the private virtues and earnest labours of the men themselves. These virtues and labours are universally recognized and honoured, but they are irrelevant to the solution of the

difficult and urgent problem, how to restore public confidence in the National Church.

Take another instance. The compulsory use of the Athanasian Creed on the principal festivals of the Christian year has for many years been felt as a grievous burden by sensitive consciences; and the justice of the complaints against the Creed has been frankly recognized by the Bishops themselves, individually and officially. The Convocations in 1879, however, left the compulsory Rubric unaltered, and contented themselves with proposing a futile and verbose declaration, which could not possibly remove the difficulties of those who felt them, and could hardly fail to arouse the disgust of those who did not.

One more instance must suffice for our present purpose. Few innovations have been intrinsically more serious, and none has lent itself to more formidable developments than the practice of ignoring the Rubric which requires that there shall be no celebration of the Holy Communion except when there is a sufficient number of communicants to receive the Sacrament together with the clergyman. The relevant Rubrics are the following:

> "And there shall be no celebration of the Lord's Supper, except there be a convenient number to communicate with the Priest, according to his discretion.
>
> "And if there be not above twenty persons in the Parish of discretion to receive the Communion; yet there shall be no Communion, except four (or three at the least) communicate with the Priest."

It is notorious that the condition expressly designed to apply to the small rural parishes has been extended to the large urban churches, and even there has not been regularly observed. Choral celebrations of

the Holy Communion with no communicants at all are general, and more often than not are freely described as "the Mass." The replacement of the familiar service of Morning Prayer by such a celebration of Holy Communion, with a pompous ritual and without communicants, has been and is extremely distasteful to all those "sober, peaceable, and truly conscientious sons of the Church of England," who value the distinctive principles of its Reformation, and reckon none of those principles more important than that which abolished the Mass and replaced it by the Communion. What proposals, then, did the Convocations offer with a view to satisfying the evident need of some effective securities against so extraordinary and extreme an abuse of the Rubrics? It will hardly seem credible that they limited their suggestions to the following new or additional Rubric.

> "There shall be no celebration of the Lord's Supper except there be three (or two at the least) to communicate with the Priest."

We have said enough to prove our point. If the proceedings in 1689 and in 1872–9 are to be accepted as indications of the action which the present Convocations are likely to take in response to the Royal Letters of Business, we submit that it is impossible to look for any effectual results from them. The last generation has not witnessed any improvement in the relations between the clergy and the laity; and the temper of the Convocations to-day is probably far less conciliatory than it was thirty years ago. The stock of national patience is certainly far less. As certainly it would not be possible to carry in the present Convocations a prohibition of the vestments,

and even if it were otherwise, it would be quite impossible to enforce such a prohibition on the clergy in the country. In these circumstances it hardly seems a prudent course for the Convocations to attempt the drafting of a new Ornaments Rubric. Rather it would appear the wisest course to decline the task proposed too rashly by the Royal Commissioners, and to accept the more cautious procedure suggested by the significant introduction of the question of "desirability" into the "Letters of Business." It is surely not desirable at the present juncture to embark for the third time on a Convocational revision of the Prayer Book. There may come the opportunity when the balance of opinion among the clergy may be less one-sided than at present; and we may dare to hope that the acute exasperation of the public mind may not survive the political circumstances which have done so much to create it. The "signs of the times" are not wholly unfavourable. Juster views of ecclesiastical history are spreading quickly among the clergy, and the evident perils of Christianity itself are compelling a graver handling of religious concerns. Is it too much to hope that the next generation of clergyman will have learned something from the blunders and failures of the present, and will bring to the difficult work of revising the Prayer Book a stronger grasp of fundamental principles, a more virile power of discrimination, and a larger tolerance?

THE END

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